

SC-SIC Council News



"Civic Engagement at Work for Public Education"

Volume 38, Issue 1, 2017

Ellen M. Still Named 2017 SIC Advocate of the Year

Ellen M. Still, former SC Department of Education Deputy Superintendent and Past Chair of the SC School Improvement Council Board of Trustees, has been named the 2017 SIC Advocate of the Year by the SC-SIC Board.

The award was announced March 18 during the SC-SIC Annual Meeting in Columbia.

The SIC Advocate of the Year Award recognizes exemplary efforts on behalf of School Improvement Councils and is presented annually to individuals who go above and beyond in supporting and promoting SICs in their particular spheres of influence.

(continued)
see "2017 SIC Advocate of the Year"
pg. 3

In this Issue

- Executive Director's Message.....pg. 2
- Changes to the Member Network.....pg. 3
- Using the SC-SIC Logo.....pg. 4
- SIC Spotlight.....pg. 4
- SC-SIC Honor 2017 Roll.....pg. 5
- Report to the Parents Reminder.....pg. 5

South Pointe High SIC Named Winner of 2017 Riley Award for SIC Excellence



L - R: Tyrone Hart, Mildred Douglass (Rock Hill School Board), Dick Riley (former SC Governor and former US Secretary of Education), Principal Al Leonard, Rebecca Gilleland (SIC Chair), Linda Gilmore, and Tom F. Hudson (Executive Director, SC-SIC)

The School Improvement Council (SIC) of South Pointe High School in Rock Hill Schools/York School District 3 has been named the recipient of the 2017 Dick and Tunky Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence.

The award was presented March 18 by former US Education Secretary and SC Governor Richard W. Riley during the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) Annual Meeting at the South Carolina State Museum in Columbia.

The annual Riley Award for SIC Excellence was created in 2002 to recognize the significant contributions made to public education by the nearly 14,000 School Improvement Council members who volunteer in every public school in the state. The award is named in honor of Secretary Riley and his late wife, and recognizes the couple's longstanding commitment to quality public education.

"The South Pointe High SIC has done wonderful work in the past year that is well-deserving of this statewide recognition," said SC-SIC Board of Trustees Chair Amelia B. McKie. "When parents, educators, students, and community members work together as a School Improvement Council to identify needs and take proactive steps to meet them, it does have significant, positive, and lasting impact for our schools, our students, their families, and our communities."

(continued)
see "South Pointe High SIC wins 2017 Riley Award"
pg. 6

Message from the Executive Director

Tom F. Hudson



As The Beatles so succinctly put it years ago, “I get by with a little help from my friends.”

At SC-SIC, we value the help and insight that local School Improvement Councils provide to their local schools – in terms of input, insight, project-based work, and focusing on goals to help achieve those set through their schools’ Five-Year Improvement Plans. And at SC-SIC, it’s our mission to assist Councils to function and grow through the services we provide.

I’d like to call the attention of SIC members to several new resources now available to them through SC-SIC’s website, which can be accessed at <http://sic.sc.gov>. These resources have been developed to complement the many already provided online to help local SICs in their roles in supporting the continuous improvement of their schools.

Now available online is a Spanish translation of the publication, *This is Your SIC – A Handbook for Effectiveness*. As the face of South Carolina continues to change and we embrace folks from all walks of life and cultures, this translation will be particularly helpful to our growing number of Hispanic families as they wish to take active roles in the lives of their children’s school communities.

The English language version of the *Handbook* has been a resource on our website for some time and we encourage all SIC members – whether English or Spanish speaking – to utilize it as they undertake their work on their local Councils.

Also now available is a Spanish translation of the downloadable brochure *School Improvement Councils - @ Work for Public Education*, highlighting the roles and work of local SICs.

Both the Spanish and English versions of the *Handbook* can be accessed on the SC-SIC website from the “Quick Links” menu listed at the right of the site’s homepage. To download either version of the SIC brochure, enter through the “SICs & SIC Leaders” portal on the homepage and locate “Brochures for SICs” listed under the “Additional Resources, Training & Publications” heading.

(continued)
see “From the Executive Director”
pg. 6



SC-SIC Board of Trustees

Amelia B. McKie, Chair - *Columbia*
Donna Hooks, Vice Chair - *Myrtle Beach*
Shari Sebuck, Secretary - *Mount Pleasant*
Michael Guarino, Immediate Past Chair - *Mauldin*
Gary S. Alexander - *Blythewood*
James B. Blassingame - *Sumter*
LTC(R) Justin F. Blum - *Florence*
Dr. Sallie Cooks - *Trenton*
Bill Evans - *Beaufort*
Jason Fulmer - *North Augusta*
Sherri R. Horton - *Clifton*
Dr. Luanne Kokolis - *Rock Hill*
Dora Leonard - *Seneca*
Jeff Nicholson - *Rock Hill*
Thessa G. Smith - *Greenwood*
Dr. Myriam E. Torres - *Columbia*

SC-SIC Staff

Tom F. Hudson
Executive Director

Claudia Parnell
Digital and Web Director

Karen Utter
Coordinator of Council Services

Debra Williams
Business Manager

Council News is an award winning publication of the South Carolina School Improvement Council. Circulation 16,000+. Your comments and articles are welcome. Contact **Claudia Parnell, Editor**, at:

USC College of Education
Wardlaw Bldg., Suite 001
Columbia, SC 29208
Phone: 803-777-7658
Toll Free: 800-868-2232
Email: sic@mailbox.sc.edu
Website: <http://sic.sc.gov>

The University of South Carolina system provides affirmative action and equal opportunity in education and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

“2017 SIC Advocate of the Year”

continued from pg. 1



2017 SIC Advocate of the Year Ellen M. Still with Tom F. Hudson, SC-SIC Executive Director, at this year’s SC-SIC Annual Meeting in Columbia.

“For her many contributions to public education, and especially for her unwavering commitment to and vocal support of the value of School Improvement Councils in South Carolina, it is the Board’s pleasure and honor to present Ms. Still with this well-deserved recognition,” said Amelia B. McKie, current Chair of the SC-SIC Board of Trustees.

A retired educator and administrator, Ms. Still is the owner of Education Builders, LLC, an educational consulting firm.

Beginning as a classroom teacher, her career led her to several leadership positions within the SC Department of Education including Deputy Superintendent for Policy, Research and Technology and Special Assistant to the State Superintendent.

She previously served as Research Director for the SC Senate Education Committee, where she was actively involved in the drafting of legislation, including that related to the creation and responsibilities of the state’s School Improvement Councils.

Ms. Still has been a long-time supporter and advocate of School Improvement Councils and the SC School Improvement Council, and served as a member of the SC-SIC Board of Trustees from 2008 to 2016, including two terms as Board Chair.

Previous recipients of the SIC Advocate of the Year Award have included state legislators, school and district level staff, and principal-SIC Chair teams.

Changes to the SC-SIC Member Network

by Claudia Parnell, SC-SIC Digital and Web Director

Many of you are familiar with the online SIC membership reporting database, the *SC-SIC Member Network*. This school year, SC-SIC has added new icons to the *Member Network* to further define the standing of each School Improvement Council’s compliance with South Carolina law.

A green check in the “Compliance status” column marks a school as **“Compliant,”** meaning the SIC has met all statutory guidelines, including reporting by the deadline of November 15. A blue asterisk in the column indicates that the school is designated as **“Reported, Non-Compliant.”** This means that the school has reported the SIC membership, but did not do it by the deadline, did not fully update the membership, and/or the SIC does not meet statutory guidelines such as member composition. If a school did not report their SIC membership at all, a red “X” is displayed in the “Compliance status” column, registering the school as **“Not Reported”** and therefore out of compliance with state law. These changes are also visible in the public, read-only view of the *Member Network*.

Compliance status	Report to the	Report to the	View
	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	
*	✓		
X	✓		
✓	✓		
X	✓		

SC-SIC continually seeks to assist each local SIC in meeting its statutory requirements. If you have questions regarding your *Member Network* status, please contact Digital and Web Director Claudia Parnell at 1-800-868-2232 or cparnell@mailbox.sc.edu.

Using the SC School Improvement Council Logo

In 2016, SC School Improvement Council modified its logo to better illustrate the dynamic, action-oriented work of SICs. SC-SIC identifies all of its publications, signs, and web-based materials by the use of this logo, and encourages local SICs to utilize it in their *SIC Reports to the Parents*, webpages, and other publications prepared by the SIC.

The new logo can be downloaded from the SC-SIC website, <http://sic.sc.gov>. To navigate directly to the download page, type <http://sic.sc.gov/Pages/DownloadtheSC-SIClogo.aspx> into the browser window. The JPEG format is available in two widths, 8" and 4".

For assistance in downloading the files or using the logo, please contact SC-SIC Digital and Web Director Claudia Parnell at 1-800-868-2232 or cparnell@mailbox.sc.edu.



SIC Spotlight: Walhalla High SIC Shines in Commitment to Engage Latino Parents

by Karen Utter, SC-SIC Coordinator of Council Services

It was early in the morning on the Friday before President's Day weekend -- a professional development day for administrators and teachers and a day off for students. But the Walhalla High School cafeteria was humming with activity.

Members of the Walhalla High School Improvement Council (including student representatives who could have been sleeping in) were busy cooking and serving a breakfast donated by local community sponsors as Walhalla High principal Steve Garrett greeted over 200 teachers and administrators from Walhalla area schools. They came at the invitation of the SIC and SIC Chair Lorilei Swanson, because they wanted to better understand Latino culture as they work to engage Latino parents in their children's education.

Dr. Myriam Torres, Assistant Professor at the Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina and Director of the Consortium for Latino Immigration Students, gave an engaging presentation on the history, culture, and diversity of the Latino population in South Carolina and its families' strengths and challenges. Dr. Torres also shared several examples of how differences in culture and language can derail a school's best intentioned efforts to connect with Latino parents.



Following the breakfast session, Dr. Torres facilitated a focus group discussion organized for a group of Spanish speaking parents from Walhalla High. The SIC wanted to learn from parents themselves about their needs and ideas on how they could engage in their children's education and contribute to the life of their school. Lunch for these participants was also provided by a community sponsor recruited by the SIC.

The day marked a new level of achievement for the Walhalla High SIC in its ongoing efforts to engage all parents in their children's education.

"Growing our SIC to the point that we could successfully implement activities on this scale has taken time, patience, and determination," said SIC Chair Swanson. "But with the support of our principal, Mr. Garrett, we have been able to bring a truly great group of parents, teachers, students, and community members together -- each of whom has brought important skills and resources to the table. The momentum we gained from these sessions will help move us forward toward our goal of meaningful engagement for all families."

Dr. Myriam Torres is also a member of the SC School Improvement Council Board of Trustees. As her schedule permits, she conducts district-wide sessions on *Latinos in South Carolina* for SICs and schools, as well as for other civic and non-profit organizations. For more information, contact SC-SIC at 1-800-868-2232.

Sixteen local School Improvement Councils Named To State SC-SIC Honor Roll for 2017

The School Improvement Councils (SICs) of 16 South Carolina public schools have been named to SC-SIC's 2017 Honor Roll for their significant efforts to foster civic engagement in public education.

The 16 School Improvement Councils named to the SC-SIC Honor Roll for 2017 are (alphabetically):

- **Bluffton Middle School SIC** (Beaufort County School District)
- **Blythewood Middle School SIC** (Richland School District 2)
- **Chapin Elementary School SIC** (School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties)
- **Chapin Intermediate School SIC** (School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties)
- **Chapin Middle School SIC** (School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties)
- **Clinton Elementary School SIC** (Lancaster County School District)
- **Hand Middle School SIC** (Richland School District 1)
- **Harbison West Elementary School SIC** (School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties)
- **Hilton Head Island High School SIC** (Beaufort County School District)
- **Laing Middle School for Science and Technology SIC** (Charleston County School District)
- **Nursery Road Elementary School SIC** (School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties)
- **Richland Northeast High School SIC** (Richland School District 2)
- **St. James Elementary School SIC** (Horry County Schools)
- **St. James High School SIC** (Horry County Schools)
- **South Florence High School SIC** (Florence Public School District 1)
- **South Pointe High School SIC** (Rock Hill Schools/York School District 3)



“These School Improvement Councils demonstrated their hard work and commitment to supporting the success of their schools in the last year,” said SC-SIC Board of Trustees Chair Amelia B. McKie. “We congratulate them on their efforts as Honor Roll SICs and we salute all of our School Improvement Councils across South Carolina for the lasting and positive impact they have on their school communities.”

SIC Report to the Parents Reminder

As a reminder to all School Improvement Councils, local *SIC Reports to the Parents* are due (under state statute) to be prepared and distributed to school communities by April 30, 2017.



These *Reports*, to be written primarily by the SIC of each school, should highlight results and SIC work toward school improvement goals for the current 2016-17 year.

Please visit the SC-SIC website, <http://sic/sc/gov>, for a helpful “*Report to the Parents*” toolkit with tips and examples as you prepare your *Report*.

Should you need additional assistance, don’t hesitate to contact the SC-SIC office at 1-800-868-2232. We’ll be glad to help!

Additionally, all SICs are asked to upload electronic versions of their *Reports* to the SC-SIC website by June 1, 2017. Questions on this? We can help with that as well!

“South Pointe High SIC Wins 2017 Riley Award”

continued from pg. 1

Presented with Honorable Mentions for their work last school year were: Bluffton Middle SIC (Beaufort County School District); Harbison-West Elementary SIC (District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties); South Florence High SIC (Florence Public School District One); and St. James Elementary SIC (Horry County Schools).

Among its award-winning work, the South Pointe SIC was concerned that its school was developing an undeserved reputation as the high school that students in its district didn't want to attend. After reviewing data on all three of the district's high schools showing that South Pointe compared well and in fact excelled in many areas, the SIC made the following requests to the Rock Hill 3 School Board: adjust attendance zones to even out student populations; analyze and fund the actual cost of operating student activities at the high schools; reduce the class size required to offer certain advanced classes; review the district's elective transfer policy; zero out existing deficits in student activity funds; and form an Equity Committee to foster equity among the district's high schools.

The district's initial response was to better enforce elective transfer policies, eliminate half of the school's \$185,000 activity deficit, and lower the number of students needed for some advanced courses. Progress on other issues required additional sustained effort by the SIC. The School Board granted all three high schools an increase of \$20,000 for band and athletics, with an additional \$15,000 to South Pointe for transportation costs, and it created an Equity Committee composed of representatives from the three high schools.

The SIC also began to market its school more intentionally, organizing events for eighth graders to learn about their new school and meet future classmates, and publicizing school achievements in traditional and social media. The SIC reports that the 2016-17 registered freshman class is the largest in the last five years.

“From the Executive Director”

continued from pg. 2

Another new resource to be found on SC-SIC's website is a set of three short video training modules covering the essence of our “SIC Basics” training, which we also provide in person at districts across the state. These modules, titled “The Basics of Organizing an SIC,” “The Basics of Operating an SIC,” and “Basic Local SIC Duties,” follow the SIC *Handbook* in providing the important background and information Council members need to know if their local SICs are to be truly functional, effective, and impactful.

These videos (each about 20 minutes in length) are intended to be supplements to in-person training, by SC-SIC staff or local SIC District Contacts, and can be used as refreshers, for individuals unable to attend an SIC training within their district, or as information during local Council meetings.

All three training videos can be viewed by clicking “Online SIC Training” under the “Quick Links” menu at the right of SC-SIC's website homepage.

A fourth new resource on SC-SIC's website is the “SIC Report to the Parents Toolkit.” This timely resource offers some helpful tips and guidance to local Councils as they craft their annual *Report to the Parents*, as well as some examples of outstanding Reports, and an optional template which they can use to construct their own *Reports*.

This toolkit (and several others) can be accessed on the SC-SIC website by clicking on the “SICs & SIC Leaders” portal and scrolling down to the heading “Toolkits for Local SICs.”

Please take time to take a look at these new resources and the many other materials and links on the SC-SIC website. These have all been created to help local School Improvement Councils undertake the work that is envisioned for them under state law.

Have questions, need clarification, or have ideas about other resources that we can provide to local SICs? Please don't hesitate to let us know. That's why we're here – to support your efforts as we're so grateful for where you are doing all you do.

