

# SC-SIC Council News



**"Civic Engagement at Work for Public Education"**

Volume 38, Issue 4, 2018

## Five SICs Named 2018 Finalists for Annual State Riley Award for SIC Excellence

Five (5) South Carolina School Improvement Councils (SICs) have been named statewide 2018 award finalists for their accomplishments in parent and civic engagement within their school communities.

The SC School Improvement Council's annual Dick and Tunky Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence was created in 2002 to recognize the



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## 2018 SC-SIC Annual Meeting Scheduled for April 14

SC-SIC's 2018 Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, April 14, at the SC State Museum in Columbia.

SIC members from across the state will gather for a day of speakers on topics of interest to SIC members, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of School Improvement Councils in South Carolina, and to recognize our finalists and winner of the 2018 Riley Award for SIC Excellence.

On the agenda are speakers Dr. Michele Myers of the University of South Carolina College of Education who will address "Family Engagement Strategies: Learning From and With Families;" Jane Turner, Executive Director of South Carolina's Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA), who will speak on "The Growing Teacher Shortage in SC (and What SICs Can Do to Help);" and Dr. Akil E. Ross, Sr., National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) 2018 National Principal of the Year and Principal of Lexington-Richland District 5's Chapin High School, who will talk on "Educating the Heart."

Attendees will also hear presentations from the five finalists for SC-SIC's 2018 Dick and Tunky Riley Award for SIC Excellence: Chapin Intermediate SIC; Hilton Head Island High SIC; Saluda High SIC; South Florence High SIC; and Walhalla High SIC.

SC-SIC's 2018 SIC Advocate of the Year and the recipient of the new *SIC Report to the Parents Annual Award of Merit* will also be announced, with the day culminating in the naming of the 2018 Riley Award winner. This will be a great day of celebrating not only the 40th year of School Improvement Councils in our state but the wonderful accomplishments of SICs working to make a lasting impact for their school communities and students.

Registration fee is only \$30.00 (check, money order or P.O.) and includes lunch and materials. The Annual Meeting registration form and agenda is now available on the SC-SIC website, <http://sic.sc.gov>. Please note that you must print and mail, email, or fax the registration form to the SC-SIC office as the form cannot be submitted electronically. Registrations must be made by Monday, April 2.

We look forward to seeing you at the SC-SIC 2018 Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 14, in Columbia!

# Message from the Executive Director

*Tom F. Hudson*



Proper training is important to any undertaking, and it's no different for locally elected and appointed School Improvement Council members.

SIC members are entrusted with some very significant work – assisting their schools in achieving goals set forth in their Five-Year School Improvement Plans – and having sound working knowledge of their roles and responsibilities as members of a Council is vital to helping those goals come to fruition.

I'm very pleased that this school year has seen a significant increase in scheduled training opportunities and the number of individuals taking part in them. To date, SC-SIC has realized more trainings and participants for 2017-18 than the entirety of last school year. Our SIC District Contacts, principals, and local SIC Chairs are to be commended in this effort to make sure that their Council members have access to the training resources they need to help effectively fulfill their duties.

And SC-SIC wants to help keep this shared commitment going. While the majority of "SIC Basics" trainings take place in the earlier part of the school year, it's never too late to provide such information for SIC members. We stand ready to help schedule these trainings on a district-wide basis throughout the entire school year – and even during the summer months!

We also offer training on other important subject areas, including "SIC Leadership" for officers and longer-tenured SIC members, and "Communicating with the Greater School Community" for SICs wishing to greater focus their efforts on outreach to parents, families, and others.

All such trainings are provided by SC-SIC staff at no cost to local SICs or their districts.

SC-SIC's Annual Meeting, which will be held this year on Saturday, April 14, also serves as a great opportunity for Council members from across the state and others to learn more about the work and impact of SICs for the schools they serve. Here, SIC members can meet representatives from other schools and districts and hear from award-winning SICs on their outstanding work. Registration for this event is \$30.00 (which includes lunch and materials), and the registration form and information is available on the SC-SIC website.

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# “Digital Native” Volunteers: Kids Giving Back Online

By Claudia Parnell, SC-SIC Digital & Web Director

*“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” –Winston Churchill*

From anti-cyberbullying campaigns to fundraisers to marches, young people today can use tech to connect with the world and hopefully make it a better place. While parents have legitimate concerns about their children’s online life, kids can increase self-confidence and their sense of accomplishment, pride, and identity by using sites, apps, and other technology to promote social consciousness, community service, and understanding of global and cultural perspectives.

*Common Sense Media*, a leading nonprofit dedicated to helping kids thrive in the world of media and technology, recommends the following sites that help kids do good:

## **Bystander Revolution**

<http://www.bystanderrevolution.org/>

Bystander Revolution houses on-site videos and other content on various topics designed to help combat bullying. Popular actors and musicians share their stories and offer advice and pointers to help prevent bullying, and kids can access suggestions from teens, parents, and anti-bullying organizations. The site can help them feel empowered and supported, and shows how kids can turn a bullying situation around.

## **Charity Miles - Running & Walking Distance Tracker App**

The Charity Miles - Running & Walking Distance Tracker is a free mileage tracker app that donates to charities based on the number of miles kids walk, run, or bike. They can select from a list of well-known charities and earn up to 10 cents per mile for biking and 25 cents per mile for running and walking. Donation money comes from the app’s corporate sponsors. Parents should be aware that the app tracks kids’ locations and shares their email address with the charities they select, so *Common Sense Media* suggests that kids use an email address set up by and for an adult. Results can be shared via social media, and your kid’s profile contains the total miles and charities they’ve funded. Being able to monitor how far walked, how many sessions used, and how much money they have raised is a great motivator for both children and adults to turn fitness goals into community service.

## **Curating Change**

<http://exhibitions.globalfundforwomen.org/curating-change-2014>

This site showcases accomplished women across the world. “Guest curators” share the stories of women from around the globe who have made a positive impact. Kids can jump to a specific spotlight where the featured women discuss how and why they decided to step in and what happened as a result of that action. Via text, video, and podcasts, kids can delve even deeper into the finer points of their stories. Issues discussed are broad enough that both boys and girls will find something that captures their interest and help them discover how female leaders from across the globe focused their energies on making the world a better place. The attraction here is content, from stories about programs that train female high school graduates in Zambia to launch their own businesses, to others about young people finding creative ways to define their generation. Parents should know that some of the issues discussed may be new to young people and, while appropriate, may present complex issues.

## **Freerice**

<http://www.freerice.com>

Endless quizzes on Humanities, English, math, chemistry, language learning, geography, sciences, and test preparation enable kids to donate 10 grains of rice to the UN World Food Program for each correct answer. Freerice has two goals: to provide education to everyone for free, and help end world hunger by providing rice to hungry people at no cost. The site’s FAQs answer questions about hunger, the nature of learning, and why sites such as Freerice need to exist. Kids love to compete with one another to see who can donate the most rice!



photo credit: <https://workdesign.com>

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# SC-EPFP Recognized for 15 Years of Leadership

The SC Education Policy Fellowship Program (SC-EPFP), coordinated in South Carolina through the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC), was recently recognized in Washington, DC, for 15 years of leadership in education policy.



The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) presented the award to SC-EPFP Coordinators Tom F. Hudson and Bruce Moseley at the National Education Policy Fellowship Program's Washington Policy Seminar in the nation's capital on March 18, where some 400 Fellows (including 17 from South Carolina) representing 17 state sites and the District of Columbia for discussions on "Debates to Decisions" regarding education.

SC-SIC has coordinated the program in South Carolina since 2010. Previous program coordinators include Sally Barefoot, Cassie Barber, John Segars, and current State Superintendent of Education Molly M. Spearman.

SC-EPFP is a 10-month professional development program for established and emerging leaders in education and related fields designed to work toward the implementation of sound education policy and practice in South Carolina. Applications for the 2018-19 SC-EPFP cohort will be accepted beginning in June.

For more on SC-EPFP, visit the SC Education Policy Fellowship page on the SC-SIC website, <http://sic.sc.gov>, or call 1-800-868-2232.

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## Community Engagement: Hearing From More Than the Vocal Minority

From NSPRA's *PRincipal Communicator*, March 2018

Issues that simmer for a long time can lead to divisiveness in the community. One way to bring successful closure to simmering issues is to fully engage the community about how to resolve them. Ultimately, through community engagement, parents and citizens are seen as owners of their schools rather than consumers or clients, or an audience to manage. It reaffirms the public's role in education and, if done properly, enables a trusting relationship to develop between citizens and school leaders.

- **Be intentional about the outcome.**

Often the hardest work around community engagement is the initial discussion about what school leaders want from the process. Frank, open discussion among school leaders prior to any engagement activity is necessary for determining the level of public participation. Determine upfront what is the question or questions that need to be answered that will best inform decision makers about how to resolve the issue.

- **Manage the community's expectations.**

Likewise, participants need to know how their input will be used before the process begins. Conflict and frustration arise when the public is assured of a high level of participation and ultimately has a low level influence on the decision. School leaders also need to make sure that participants understand the process that will be used. A community dialogue should not be an open mic night for frustrated parents. Lay out clearly the process and expectations ahead of time in your meeting announcements and on the website.

- **Reach out beyond the usual suspects.**

Make sure community dialogue announcements, invitations, and surveys are translated into the major languages used in your district. Interpreters should be on hand to guide the discussion and capture the highlights of the conversation. If you have parent liaisons in your schools, tap into their networks and get the word out through them.

- **Report back to stakeholders.**

Although it may feel like it, the process is not yet complete when a decision is reached. In the spirit of transparency and trust, you need to report back to your stakeholders the decision reached by school leadership. Hopefully, the decision will have aligned with the community's wishes. However, in some cases, when the community's wishes are mixed, you should include an explanation of how and why a decision was made.

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# “Digital Native Volunteers”

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## Kiva

<http://www.kiva.org>

Using Kiva, kids and families can make micro-loans to small businesses in Third World countries. For as little as \$25.00, “anyone can help a borrower start or grow a business, go to school, access clean energy or realize their potential. For some, it’s a matter of survival, for others it’s the fuel for a life-long ambition.” ([www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org)). Kids love going through stories about borrowers and their needs, and, in the process, learn what it takes to make a small business grow and the importance of lending to those in need. When loans are repaid (at this time there is a 97% loan repayment rate, according to the site) they learn a valuable lesson about personal accountability. The process lends itself to family discussions about adversities faced by people in other countries of which kids may not have a full understanding. When their micro-loan is repaid, the excitement starts all over again when the kids get to pick a new borrower to lend to!

## Sustainaville - An Ethical Game

App

Sustainaville - An Ethical Game is a simulation game created by the Save the Children organization about creating sustainable communities. Kids build communities in four zones: a savanna, an arid climate, a tropical area, and on an island. All are initially undeveloped. As play progresses, more of the game gets unlocked, including tools and bonuses, and the difficulty level increases. They can also connect with friends who are also playing the game. Levels begin with developing a water source, a house, and a food crop and advance to the work of the requirements of each level, such as the proper amount of water, food, housing, health, education, and disaster preparedness. The game incorporates in-app purchases, with the money going to Save the Children. Parents should set clear rules about such purchases, and can have discussions with their kids about the differences between in-app purchases that go to companies and those that go to charities. The game teaches kids about creating a sustainable community and how resources work together. They’re encouraged to think seriously and creatively about problem-solving and discover how to effectively allocate resources. Kids’ natural curiosity can lead to family discussions about the kinds of communities Save the Children tries to help and broaden understanding of the challenges faced by those in need.

So while parents need to be mindful of what their children are doing online, there are many valuable resources and activities there which can help them grow and learn, and take an active role in the greater community in which they live.

For information on more sites and apps that can help kids do good, and advice and information on other topics related to digital and social media, visit Common Sense Media at <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>.

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## SIC Reports To the Parents Due by April 30

Local School Improvement Councils are reminded that their statutorily required annual *SIC Reports to the Parents* are due to be provided to their school communities by April 30, 2018.

These *Reports* are intended to be issued by local SICs to inform parents and others of progress made during the current academic year on school and SIC goals, and are helpful resources in providing information on the work of local Councils and their partnership with school leaders in addressing school and student needs as outlined in schools’ Five-Year Plans.

Examples of *Reports* can be found online through the SC-SIC *Member Network* at <https://sic.ed.sc.edu/network/>. On the SC-SIC website at <http://sic.sc.gov/SICInformation/Pages/SICsSICLeaders.aspx>, you can find an “SIC Report to the Parents Toolkit” with helpful tips for preparing these *Reports*.

For the first time, SC-SIC will be recognizing a local SIC and its outstanding *SIC Report to the Parents* with an Award of Merit at the 2018 SC-SIC Annual Meeting in Columbia April 14. Your SIC could be in the running in 2019 for such recognition with a well-crafted *Report* for 2017-18!

Have questions or need some suggestions? Call the SC-SIC office at 1-800-868-2232.

# “2018 Finalists Named for Riley Award”

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significant contributions made to public education by the nearly 14,000 local SIC members who volunteer in the state’s 1,100-plus K-12 public schools.

In alphabetical order, this year’s Riley Award finalists are:

- Chapin Intermediate SIC (School District 5 of Lexington and Richland Counties)
- Hilton Head Island High SIC (Beaufort County School District)
- Saluda High SIC (Saluda County Schools)
- South Florence High SIC (Florence County School District 1)
- Walhalla High SIC (School District of Oconee County)

“We commend these School Improvement Councils on the wonderful things they have done for their schools and students,” said SC-SIC Board of Trustees Chair Amelia B. McKie. “Working together through their SICs, parents, educators, students, and community members make a lasting and meaningful impact for the schools and young people they serve.”

The winner of the this year’s Riley Award will be selected from this year’s finalists by an independent panel of reviewers and announced during the 2018 SC-SIC Annual Meeting, Saturday, April 14, at the South Carolina State Museum in Columbia.

The SC-SIC Riley Award for SIC Excellence is named in honor of former SC Governor and US Education Secretary Richard Riley and his late wife, Tunky, and recognizes the couple’s longstanding commitment to quality public education.

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## “From the Executive Director”

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And for SIC members who perhaps could not attend a training session scheduled in their districts, or who would like a “refresher” and the roles and responsibilities of Councils and their members, SC-SIC has posted online three 20-minute videos on various aspects of “SIC Basics.” Members can watch these at home or local SICs can show them as part of their monthly SIC meetings. The SC-SIC website, <http://sic.sc.gov>, also holds a vast variety of other resources (such as the downloadable *SIC Handbook* in English and Spanish, several helpful “Toolkits,” and the SIC Activities Resource Library”) to help SIC members and leaders better serve their school communities through their work.

So as local School Improvement Councils move into the final stretch of the 2017-18 school year, I would ask them to keep an eye pointed toward member training. The SC-SIC office still has open dates to come to districts and conduct training, and our staff is very willing to assist with this. Just contact us at 1-800-868-2232 or by email at [SIC@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:SIC@mailbox.sc.edu).

Thank you for all you do for your local SICs, your schools, and the students you serve!

