The Dick and Tunky Riley Award
for
School Improvement Council
Excellence

A Collection of Selected SIC Activities

Volume I

Support for Student Learning

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Message from the SC-SIC Executive Director

Dear SIC Member:

Across South Carolina each year, over 13,000 School Improvement Council members like you come together on 1,100-plus SICs with a common goal – to make a difference in the lives of the schools and students they serve.

Each school community (and each SIC) has its own unique personality, set of needs, and available resources to help their school be successful. But sometimes, local School Improvement Councils can wonder just exactly what they can do to make a real difference.

This series of six publications developed by the SC School Improvement Council is intended to provide examples of what some effective SICs have accomplished and to offer ideas in a number of topic areas so that your SIC can undertake its work in a planned, thoughtful, and meaningful fashion.

Presented in each of them are a variety of projects and endeavors of SICs that have been recognized through SC-SIC's Dick and Tunky Riley Award for SIC Excellence process. Many of these examples are applicable to most school communities, while others may be more specialized. Review them and identify those which might be a good fit for your SIC and school community.

As always, please consider the SC-SIC office as a ready resource to assist you in your efforts. We are only a phone call or an email away.

Thank you for your service on your School Improvement Council. Your dedication of time and energy to help your school and its students is valuable and appreciated.

You have my best wishes for a year of successful and significant SIC work!

Tom F. Hudson
Executive Director
SC School Improvement Council

I. Introduction

This volume is one in a series highlighting activities undertaken by *Riley Award* honorees since the inception of the Award in 2002. SC-SIC has collected and organized these activities by general topic areas.

These activities were selected from among case statements submitted by SICs who participated in the Riley Award process and were named to the Honor Roll, received an Honorable Mention award, or were named a *Riley Award* winner. The name of the SIC, the school district, and the *Riley Award* year follow each activity. This series is not intended to catalogue every activity undertaken by *Riley Award* honorees; activities were selected to provide readers with examples from a broad cross-section of topic areas.

In some cases, you will find additional resources listed at the end of a topic. These are only a sampling of the many resources available online or through universities, non-profits, and government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels. Please contact SC-SIC if you need assistance in identifying additional resources in a particular topic area.

II. How to Use the Information in this Collection

Identify Your School's Needs and Define Your Goals before Choosing Activities

This collection was prepared in response to SIC member requests for more information about *Riley Award* honoree activities from past years. It is important to remember, however, that SICs selected these activities based on their school's unique needs and goals for improvement.

To help ensure that your time and effort are directed toward activities that are appropriate for your school, consider the following questions <u>before</u> selecting, planning and implementing specific activities:

1. Are we addressing a need that was identified in our school's Five-Year School Improvement (Renewal) Plan?

2. If not, have we looked at other existing data or collected data ourselves in order to verify that the need actually exists? Have we confirmed that this need impacts student achievement either directly or indirectly? Do we have enough information to know what factors contribute to this need at our school?

3. Have we defined the goal that we hope this activity will help us achieve? Is our goal aligned with one or more goals in the School Improvement (Renewal) Plan?

4. Will this activity help us meet our goal by addressing one or more of the factors that contribute to the need we are working on?

5. Will this activity duplicate activities that are already being implemented by others? Is it a good fit for our school community?

6. What resources do we need to implement this activity with quality? Do we have these resources? If not, can we get the resources we lack through partnerships with other individuals or organizations in the school or community?

Lessons Learned from *Riley Award* Honorees

In reviewing the many case statements describing the experiences of *Riley Award* honorees, SC-SIC staff made several general observations that may be helpful to your SIC:

- It will likely take more than a single, one-time activity in order to achieve an SIC goal. Most *Riley Award* honorees undertook several, strategically linked activities which together were directed toward achieving one of their goals.

- It will likely take several years of sustained SIC effort in order to meet longer-term school improvement goals. For this reason, it's important that SICs plan ahead on how they will transfer information and responsibilities for key activities from year to year.

- Collaboration and partnerships are essential to SIC effectiveness. *Riley Award* honorees often worked together with various combinations of administrators, teachers, school staff, and other school and community organizations to implement school improvement activities.

- It's important to do your homework! *Riley Award* honorees took the time to review their School Improvement (Renewal) Plan and school performance data, gather input from stakeholders using surveys and other tools, and research what has worked for other schools like theirs by going out and visiting other schools, consulting with nearby universities or non-profit organizations, and using online resources.

- Don't hesitate to ask for help. *Riley Award* honorees often invited experts in to help educate themselves about their area of focus. They called on teachers, guidance counselors, dieticians, district staff, local law enforcement, traffic safety experts, marketing and communication professionals, college professors, pediatricians and school nurses, and others to better understand their schools' needs and find effective solutions.

- Effective SICs divide their work among committees that are organized around each specific goal or area of focus. Many *Riley Award* honorees reported that forming a committee was an important step in moving forward with work on their goals.

The staff at SC-SIC hope that you will find this collection of *Riley Award* activities to be a source of ideas and inspiration as you work through the school improvement process. More information about the *Riley Award* and recent *Riley Award* honorees is available on our website at *http://sic.sc.gov*. If your SIC needs individualized assistance in any area of your work, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the SC-SIC staff. We are here to help!

III. Riley Award Activities

Support for Student Learning

1. Tutor programs

Brainbuilders and Early Risers. Brainbuilders is a volunteer-based, in-school tutoring program. Students are referred by classroom teachers based on academic need. They are placed with a volunteer tutor who comes at a scheduled time to provide one-on-one, teacher directed tutoring. Early Risers

targets at-risk students in grades 3-5 who need extra assistance in order to close the gap in test scores in Math and English Language Arts. Students arrive early several times each week for computer-based instruction, practice, and assistance in the computer lab from parent volunteers. *(Buena Vista Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2014).*

Reading Buddies. After researching successful programs at other schools, the SIC sponsored the creation of a Reading Buddies program at their school. In this program, older children read to younger children while developing new interpersonal bonds. *(North Augusta Elementary SIC, Aiken County Public School District, 2011).*

Teachers provide additional tutoring. This SIC led discussions on the need for additional tutoring for students that resulted in an ongoing tutoring program in which every teacher provides an hour of student tutoring per week. *(Indian Land Middle SIC, Lancaster County School District, 2010).*

Enhancements to individualized assistance program. After meeting with the principal and school guidance counselor to discuss the existing individualized learning assistance program and ways it could be strengthened, this SIC undertook several activities. It set up an SIC booth at Grandparents' Day to recruit individuals to volunteer as mentors for students with learning challenges. The SIC also recruited local high school students to mentor students on a weekly basis. It partnered with the local hospital to recruit nurses and hospital personnel to provide mentoring services. The school also implemented classroom differentiated instruction days for students who are not involved in the gifted and talented program. *(Camden Elementary School for the Creative Arts SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2008).*

Perseverance in recruitment of volunteer tutors. This SIC undertook a project to recruit volunteer tutors to assist at-risk students in studying for their exit exam. The SIC estimated that it took around 20 phone calls or personal visits to community members to acquire each volunteer, but SIC members pressed on until they had recruited a total of 17 volunteers. *(Wade Hampton High SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2007).*

Second Grade Assistance Program and Challenge Club. This SIC worked with local agencies and obtained grants to help expand the Manchester Tutoring Program to include second grade students who needed help (the Second Grade Assistance Program) as well as give additional accelerated learning opportunities to higher-performing students (the Challenge Club). *(Manchester Elementary SIC, Sumter County School District, 2004).*

Additional Resources

SC Chamber of Commerce, School Homework Centers program *(http://www.scchamber.net/programs-resources/homework-centers).*

Best Practices for Tutoring Programs: A Guide to Quality (2011). St. Paul Public Schools Foundation *(htpps://sppsfoundation.org)*

2. High School Freshman Academies

Several SICs worked to create a Freshman Academy for ninth graders at their schools. A Freshman Academy is a transition program that creates a "school within a school" to help incoming ninth graders adjust to high school. Ultimately, the goal is to help reduce the drop-out rate and improve academic achievement. The North Augusta High School SIC played a vital role in creating a Freshman Academy

at their school. *(North Augusta High SIC, Aiken County Public School District, 2013)*. The Ridge View High SIC also partnered with their school administration to develop a Ninth Grade Academy. *(Ridge View High SIC, Richland School District 2, 2004)*.

Additional examples of high schools in South Carolina that have implemented a Freshman Academy include Wren High School *(Anderson School District)*, Berkeley High School *(Berkeley County School District)*, and Spartanburg High School *(Spartanburg School District 7)*.

Additional Resources

Easing the Transition to High School: Research and Best Practices Designed to Support High School Learning, National High School Center. *(http://www.betterhighschools.org)*

3. Enhancements to STEM learning opportunities (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

Going Google. The SIC supported a smooth rollout of their school's 1:1 Chromebook initiative by gathering input from stakeholders, visiting other schools, and brainstorming ideas to inform the design of the device distribution process, assisting in planning and assignment of tasks, and sponsoring an evening event to distribute the devices. Child care was provided and students and families received Chromebook training, free food, and entertainment. Close to 1,000 devices were distributed that evening, and all 1,200 + students had a device in hand within one week. *(South Florence High SIC, Florence Public School District One, 2018)*.

School-wide garden. This SIC created a school-wide garden plot in the middle of the school campus and developed a program in collaboration with school staff to sustain the garden and use it as a teaching tool for students. The garden continues to be funded through grants from government agencies, businesses, and community organizations. Students get a chance to learn, touch, and taste their work every spring and fall. Garden lessons are taught by a Master Gardener and are aligned with South Carolina classroom standards. From worm releases, plant parts and animal habitats to soil, rocks, and landforms, students gain an understanding of the concept of sustainability and how ecosystems work. Local Master Gardeners, the school district's wellness committee, and student teachers from Winthrop University also use the garden as a teaching tool and model of a garden that produces both beauty and bounty. *(Ebinport Elementary SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2016)*.

USA Test Prep resources for Algebra 2. One of the challenges that this SIC recognized was that only 10% of students were testing college-ready in math. In response, members of this SIC wrote a successful grant proposal to purchase a subscription to USA TestPrep resources for Algebra 2 students at its school and to purchase loaner calculators that students could take home with them to practice math skills. The grant also funded the desserts served at a student-led workshop for parents. Students showcased their work and demonstrated USA TestPrep tutorials for parents. Teachers also spoke to parents about the importance of Algebra 2 to success in college entrance exams and future careers. *(South Florence High SIC, Florence Public School District One, 2016)*.

New outdoor classroom. Due to the grant writing efforts of this SIC, the school was able to create an outdoor classroom to enhance teaching and learning. Parents, students, staff, and community members completed the landscape and officially opened the classroom on Earth Day. Parents and community attended this event which was the subject of a story aired on local news. Students have used the classroom to study such things as butterflies, the changes in season, and leaf shapes. The SIC also formed a landscape committee of parents, staff, and a community member that will continue to maintain the

outdoor classroom and school grounds. *(Baron DeKalb Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2012).*

Environment, Science, and Technology Night. This SIC and teachers teamed together to organize an Environment, Science, and Technology night. The program gave students an opportunity to showcase their technology-based environmental projects. Community partners also shared relevant science and technology-based activities that involved parents and students learning together. Community partners included state and local utilities and environmental agencies, a local university, a local state park, aquarium, and a local TV station presenting on topics such as electricity, watersheds, marine organisms, ecology, weather, and interactive technology. *(Burgess Elementary SIC, Horry County Schools, 2011).*

Owl's Nest, Science Kit, Mining Field Trip. This SIC undertook several initiatives to enrich science education opportunities with the goal of improving science test scores. The SIC led the effort to create an outdoor classroom, the Owl's Nest, to provide students with an opportunity to study native habitats. The SIC obtained funding from a variety of community organizations including the local Jaycees, Rotary Club, and Junior League as well as several local businesses. Science kits were also provided to complement learning in the outdoor classroom, giving students an opportunity to examine specimens under a microscope. Another initiative was a Mobile Mining Field Trip for first graders, giving them hands-on experiences with stones and gems. *(Camden Elementary School for the Creative Arts SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2010).*

Odyssey Compass Learning. This SIC urged their school to be more proactive in training all parents to use technology tools available through Odyssey Compass Learning to promote practice and retention in math skills over the summer as well as during the school year. The SIC also recommended that the school spend its extra Title I funds on additional teacher training on the Odyssey system, as well as the purchase of additional math manipulatives associated with the Everyday Math curriculum so that teachers could fully implement the program. *(Nursery Road Elementary SIC, School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties, 2010).*

Curriculum Additions to Outdoor Classroom. On behalf of their school, this SIC won a Lowe's Toolbox for Education Grant to add science curriculum items to their Outdoor Classroom. One of the major projects undertaken was the planting of a palmetto tree. *(Stone Academy of Communication Arts SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2010).*

Family Science Night, Science Fair, In-School Field Trips. This SIC undertook several initiatives to enrich student science learning. It coordinated a family science night program featuring a presentation by Mad Science as part of the school's Science Week activities. It also provided support for the school science fair by recruiting volunteers from among students at local universities, stay-at-home parents, and retired teachers to work with students who needed help with their projects. Other school science enrichment activities included in-school field trips provided by local museums and environmental and conservation groups, a three-day field trip to Camp Thunderbird to reinforce life science and social science learning standards, and a school trip to the Space Camp in Huntsville Alabama. The SIC and PTO worked together to ensure that no child was unable to participate in field trip opportunities due to financial need. The SIC also coordinated several successful grant proposals on behalf of their school, including a Lowe's Toolbox for Education grant to enhance the school's learning centers and outdoor classroom, a mini grant from Toyota Tapestry to fund creation of a schoolyard field guide that was written, illustrated and published by students, and a Target field trip grant to fund a field trip to Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia. *(The Children's School at Sylvia Circle SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2010, 2009).*

Improvements to nature trail, tree identification, and signage. This SIC undertook several projects to improve a nature trail adjacent to their school's outdoor classroom. A recent storm had made the trail impassable. The SIC organized a group of volunteers equipped with the tools needed to remove fallen trees and debris, making the trail accessible again to teachers and students. At the request of a teacher, an SIC member located a local tree expert who identified various trees along the trail. Signs were then staked along the trail identifying the trees for students. *(Hunt Meadows Elementary SIC, Anderson School District 1, 2009, 2007)*

Lighthouse Lookout Nature Trail. This SIC spearheaded efforts to make environmental improvements to their school yard and grounds. It coordinated local business support, including funds from a Lowe's Toolbox grant, to support construction of the Lighthouse Lookout Nature Trail. Students use the trail to observe animals, habitats, and vegetation. Sand boxes record animal prints and student-built bird feeders hang throughout the surrounding woods. Students also helped to illustrate a trail brochure. This and other improvements to the school grounds qualified the school for certification as a National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitat. *(Bookman Road Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2, 2008).*

Volunteer help for science teachers. This SIC chose to focus on helping students improve their science process skills. SIC members inventoried the materials from their school's under-used science lab and recruited volunteers who provided hands-on assistance to teachers as they planned and implemented lessons in the lab. *(Chukker Creek Elementary SIC, Aiken County Public School District, 2007).*

Recycling program. This SIC assisted the school's Beta Club in establishing a recycling program for families. Program activities included sending recycling pledge cards to all members of the school community, sponsoring greeting card and phone book recycling drives, adding a recycling dumpster in the back of the school to collect paper products from families and the school, creating a system for the school to recycle printer cartridges, and collecting plastics from the school and delivering them to a recycling center. *(Hunt Meadows Elementary SIC, Anderson School District 1, 2007).*

Night Sky Learning Lab. This SIC sponsored a Night Sky Learning Lab, where local astronomy buffs came with their telescopes to help students and families learn more about the night sky. *(Doby's Mill Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2006).*

Robotics Team. This SIC, together with corporate sponsors, organized two robotics teams at their school. *(Saluda Trail Middle SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2004).*

Additional Resources

EdVenture (professional development and school programs) *(http://edventure.org).*

Google CS First Clubs (computer science clubs for students) *(http://www.cs-first.com/).*

IT-oLogy *(http://www.it-ology.org/en/ColumbiaSC.aspx).*

National Wildlife Federation, Schoolyard Habitats, *(http://www.nwf.org/).*

Roper Mountain Science Center *(http://www.ropermountain.org).*

4. Literacy

Supporting improved reading through classroom libraries, elementary & intermediate school partnership. To help all students achieve the highest levels of literacy, the SIC's literacy subcommittee focused first on classroom library collections. After reviewing student needs and how students used the libraries, the SIC decided to focus on acquiring short, content-specific, high interest materials representing a wide range of reading levels. As a result of the SIC's efforts, libraries were expanded or improved in more than forty classrooms. In addition, the subcommittee developed a literacy program in partnership with one of its feeder elementary schools. Students from the SIC's intermediate school read with selected elementary students and learned how to help younger students choose texts that matched their interests and reading skills. *(Chapin Intermediate School, School District 5 of Lexington and Richland Counties, 2018).*

Chapin Readers Program. This SIC recognized that some of its students did not have an adult in their lives who could spend time outside of school reading with them on a regular basis. To respond to this need, the SIC worked together with teachers, reading coaches, and the media specialist at its school to create the Chapin Readers program. The SIC collaborated with the school district to develop a permission slip for parents and to ensure that all volunteers were cleared through the district's volunteer approval process. It recruited volunteers, including the city's mayor, to read to a student at least once a week in the school library between 7:00 am and 7:35 am. The school's reading coach provided volunteers with training on how to work with their reader in ways that were most effective in building on classroom literacy instruction. In 2016-17, the program reached over 45 students and positive impacts were measured in both students and participating volunteers. *(Chapin Elementary School, School District 5 of Lexington and Richland Counties, 2017).*

Reading Heroes Project. This SIC created the Reading Heroes project to provide every student with 3 free reading-level appropriate books to take home for their own summer reading library. In order to make this happen, the SIC partnered with the PTO (for administrative and bookkeeping assistance), with the District Office (for marketing and communication services), with the local Fox News affiliate (for promotional segments), and with the Richland County Public Library (to advocate the importance of sustained reading). Students raised $300 dollars toward the cost of obtaining books through their "Penny Wars." Along with the books, students took home a reading journal, parent survey, and the SC Education Oversight Committee's "Family Reading Activity Guide." Students who engaged in summer reading were rewarded with a back-to-school luau. The SIC is also creating a "Lending Library," for use during the school year. It will be created in part with Reading Heroes books that students have outgrown and returned. *(Harbison West Elementary SIC, School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties, 2017).*

Little Free Libraries. This SIC worked with community donors and school district maintenance to establish five "Little Free Libraries" in some of the lower socio-economic areas of its school's attendance zone. Children now have easy access to leveled reading books and can practice reading at home during the evenings and on weekends. *(Ebinport Elementary SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2016).*

Weekly Tutoring and Shared Reading. As a result of SIC leadership, the school partnered with the Midlands Reading Consortium (MRC) to provide struggling readers in grades K-2 with weekly tutoring and shared reading sessions with adult volunteers. The SIC also introduced the school to the county library staff and partnered together with them to establish the Summer Stride summer reading program and Here Comes Kindergarten at a nearby subsidized public housing complex. Summer Stride provided students with shared reading support from adult volunteers. Here Comes Kindergarten provided support to families as they learned to engage effectively both in their children's learning and with

their children's school. *(Harbison West Elementary SIC, School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties, 2015).*

Book Buddies. This SIC sought to increase student access to reading materials through a "Book Buddies" program. The program operated twice a week in the morning before school in the cafeteria; one day for K-2 and one day for grades 3-5. It operated in a "coffee shop" atmosphere where students could hang out and start reading a book to see if they liked it or not before making their final choice. Volunteers assisted younger children and used the time to read aloud to them. Students could either read and return the book or take it home to keep. The SIC obtained books for the program through donations or purchased them using funds donated by the PTA. The program was initially run by SIC and Girl Scout volunteers, but was eventually transformed into a student/parent-volunteer program. *(Rudolph Gordon Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2015).*

Target READ Mentoring and Reading Initiative. This program targeted second graders who lacked an adult role model to read to them or listen to them read aloud. SIC members and other volunteers and business partners served as reading mentors. *(Doby's Mill Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2014).*

Race to Read, Meet Me at the Library, Build-a-Book party. This SIC and school partnered on several activities to support their school's focus on literacy. These included the Race to Read, the proceeds of which were donated to the County Public Library; Meet Me at the Library Family Reading Night which was held at a nearby branch of the County Public Library; and a Build a Book party for students. *(Doby's Mill Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2014, 2010).*

No Homework and Family Reading Nights. The school designated one weeknight a month as an SIC No Homework night. Teachers do not assign homework on these nights. Instead, families are encouraged to participate in an evening activity at the school such as Family Game Night, Family Math or Science night, or the Family Reading Nights that are co-sponsored by the SIC and school Media Center. Family Reading Nights have been so well attended, parents are asked to bring blankets or camp chairs with them because the library cannot hold all of the participants. During this time, students also have an opportunity to take Accelerated Reader tests to earn reward points and check out books for home reading. *(Doby's Mill Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2014, 2006).*

Reading Prize Patrol. The SIC organized a Reading Prize Patrol at its school. Students who were caught reading when the Prize Patrol visited their homes were rewarded with bags of books for their household. *(Eagle Nest Elementary SIC, Dorchester School District 2, 2013).*

Reading level labels for classroom library books. This SIC learned that, while many classrooms had libraries, most of the books were not labeled with information about the appropriate reading level, making it difficult for students to choose Just Right books. SIC members collected the books and used the Accelerated Reader website to look up and label over 5,000 books. *(Brennen Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1, 2011).*

Student musical production. With donations from their school's PTSO and in partnership with teachers and parents, this SIC developed and implemented a plan to promote improved student literacy by involving the entire student body in a musical production of Beauty and the Beast. A complete curriculum with class activities including journals, video copies of the movie, a copy of the book, and activities were supplied to each teacher. Students saw the musical production and then wrote about what it was like to read, watch a movie, and watch a live theatre production of the same story. The SIC found a partner school for this project in Arizona. They shared curriculum materials and supplies and students

in both schools participated in the same activities. *(Jesse Boyd Elementary SIC, Spartanburg School District 7, 2011).*

Electronic books and online reading programs. This SIC worked with the school's Media Specialist to review and implement programs that would drive interest in and improve student reading performance. They focused on electronic media to reach students who were not interested in traditional books. The program for upper grades focused on electronic books (Playaways) played on iPod type devices. Students listened to their favorite books as they read along. For the younger grades, the SIC supported the Media Specialist in implementing online reading programs (BookFlix) and tests that included games and other interactive activities that encourage children to have fun reading and develop foundational reading skills. *(Round Top Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2, 2010).*

Book drive for classroom reading baskets. This SIC organized a used book drive that collected almost 1,500 books for classroom reading baskets. *(Lake Forest Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2008).*

LEAP into Reading and book drive. This SIC sponsored a LEAP into Reading event for children in the community ages 1-4. The SIC was successful in increasing attendance from the prior year by moving the location of the event from the school to a room at a local church. Children ate free chicken fingers, sang kooky songs, got messy with fun crafts, and received books to keep. SIC members staffed learning stations, the city's mayor attended, and a local high school sent teacher cadets to assist. Activities included a writing center with blank mini books and ideas for parents and kids to create a story together, an art center with rainbow tracing, and a place for kids to use shaving cream and sand to engage in tactile writing and drawing experiences. The event was designed to provide parents and kids with early literacy opportunities to better prepare them for the start of school. The SIC also headed up a book drive and collected enough books to distribute 50 gift bags to low-income students and their families. The SIC, working with teachers, matched the books in each bag to the student recipient's reading level. *(Laurel Hill Primary SIC, Charleston County School District, 2008).*

Reading incentives programs. This SIC and school sponsored Sock it to a Good Book and Reading Rodeo, two 7-week reading incentive programs during which students recorded the amount of time they spent reading. Incentive awards included invitations to a Sock Hop Reading Celebration featuring an Elvis Presley impersonator and a school rodeo. *(Pineview Elementary SIC, Lexington School District 2, 2008).*

PAWS (Parents Are Writers). Parents were invited to submit their own writing on the topic of the month such as "Write about an African American who has influenced/impacted your life in a very, very special way" and "Write about an activity that your family enjoys doing together." Some parents read their papers at a Parent Café and all submissions were displayed on a PAWS Club display. *(Sue Cleveland Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2008).*

Reading fluency kits. This SIC approached the education foundation in their district which agreed to fund the purchase of Great Leaps reading fluency kits for their school. The SIC then coordinated a volunteer effort to provide tutors to work with individual students. *(Chukker Creek Elementary SIC, Aiken County Public School District, 2007).*

Students write faculty and staff biographies for school newsletter. This SIC enlisted 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders to interview school faculty and staff and write biographies that were featured in the school's weekly newsletters. This introduced school faculty and staff to the school community while

expanding student communication and writing skills. *(River Springs Elementary SIC, School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties, 2005).*

Family reading nights for English and Spanish speaking families. This SIC sponsored monthly Family Reading Nights in the Media Center at their school. Community storytellers and business partners were invited to come and share stories with school families. Local businesses donated door prizes. The SIC also sponsored a similar event for Spanish speaking parents and their children. In addition to storytelling activities, students were encouraged to take Reading Counts tests and check out books to read at home. *(Brooklyn Springs Elementary SIC, Lancaster County School District, 2004).*

Reading incentive program. After gathering input and doing extensive research, this SIC developed a reading incentive program to fit the special needs and preferences of its school. The SIC's program involved the entire school family: students, parents/guardians, siblings, teachers, staff, and administrators. Reading objectives and guidelines were set for students, families, teachers, and administrators. The SIC Chair wrote a letter to parents explaining how the program worked. Students were challenged to meet the minimum number of required reading minutes for their grade level in order to earn an invitation to the school's Catch the Reading Wave Beach Blast party. Classrooms that averaged the highest number of reading minutes in the primary and elementary grades were also treated to a bowling party with the principal and assistant principal. The SIC partnered with the school's PTA to provide smaller incentives throughout the course of the program. The SIC also set up a Reading Buddies service through the school's service learning program so that younger students who did not have enough help at home to complete their reading minutes could get additional help from a 5th grader. *(North Elementary SIC, Lancaster County School District, 2004).*

Additional Resources

All About Adolescent Literacy *("AdLit") (http://www.adlit.org/).*

C.C. Pinckney Elementary Reading Prize Patrol *(https://www.army.mil/article/183964/pinckney_patrols_jackson_for_reading_heros).*

Capapano, S, Fleming, J. & Elias, M. (2009). Building an effective classroom library. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education* [online], 5(1), 59-73. *(available for download at sic.sc.gov under the "SIC & SIC Leaders" portal, SC Read to Succeed Act tab).*

Little Free Library *(http://littlefreelibrary.org).*

Read to Succeed, SC Department of Education *(http://ed.sc.gov).*

Reading Rockets (Pre-K and elementary literacy) *(http://www.readingrockets.org/).*

South Carolina's Read to Succeed Act *(http://sic.sc.gov/Pages/ReadtoSucceedAct.aspx).*

5. Expanded Course Offerings

Enhancements to Spanish program. This SIC formed a committee to study the Spanish language program at their school. They conducted a parent survey to get feedback from parents on the current program and developed a proposal to enhance and extend the program at their school. *(Sullivan's Island Elementary SIC, Charleston County School District, 2009).*

Increased course offerings for students at small school. Parents at this SIC's school were concerned that their children did not have access to certain college credit courses due to a district policy that prevented the school from offering the courses unless a minimum number of students registered. The school's enrollment was several hundred students smaller than other high schools in the district, making it more difficult to meet the minimum registration requirement. In response, the SIC contacted school board members and district officials, and asked their school's administrators to discuss the issue with the superintendent and district officials. The district proposed possible solutions to the problem in a presentation to the school board that was held at the SIC's school. As a result, several classes desired by parents were offered to students at the school and/or at a remote location. *(South Pointe High SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2007).*

Modified Block Schedule. This SIC successfully advocated to have their school implement a modified block schedule. This created eight sessions each day, which enabled the school to offer a broader range of subjects at different times and levels of difficulty. *(Ridge View High SIC, Richland School District 2, 2004).*

Additional Resources

VirtualSC (SC Department of Education) (VirtualSC offers SC public schools and individual students access to free online SAT/ACT test preparation courses, virtual learning labs, ELA and Math Skills recovery, and Elementary Keyboarding. Also offered are courses for high school credit at the College Prep, Honors, and, Advanced Placement levels as well as Credit Recovery for students who previously failed a course.) *(https://virtualsc.org)*

6. College and Career Development Services

Extend and enhance college and career development services. This SIC partnered with the school's guidance department to set goals, plan, and implement a comprehensive strategy to extend and enhance the school's college and career development services and to communicate more frequently about these opportunities on social media platforms. The SIC and school collaborated to provide students access to (1) the Naviance program, a comprehensive, web-based program that houses information for all students on classes, grades, schedules, college information, scholarship information, and career information; (2) the Bengals and Beyond student guide for juniors and seniors containing information about the guidance department, graduation requirements, career clusters, junior/senior checklists, college requirements, college application tips, SAT/ACT information, scholarship information, financial aid, and timelines; and (3) additional opportunities to explore college and career options through college visits and other trips related to career exploration, internships and other work-based learning opportunities, college representative days on campus, and frequent SAT/ACT preparation workshops. *(Blythewood High SIC, Richland School District 2, 2015).*

Job Shadowing Day. This SIC, school, and local Chamber of Commerce sponsored a school Job Shadowing Day. Participating employers committed to hosting job shadowing teams of students and adults for a half-day in the workplace. Students were placed based on their career area of interest as identified through the school's career program. *(Mauldin High SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2010).*

Additional Resources

Personal Pathways to Success (SC Department of Education) *(http://ed.sc.gov/).*

South Carolina Alliance of Regional Education Center Coordinators (2012) *Business Connections Handbook (http://recs.sc.gov/Documents/Business-Connections-Handbook-5-12.pdf).*

VirtualSC (SC Department of Education) (offers SC public schools and students access to free online SAT/ACT and other test preparation courses) *(https://virtualsc.org /).*

7. New Instructional Techniques

Paideia. Along with the administration, faculty, staff, and PTO, this SIC researched the Paideia instructional method, a philosophy that incorporates three complementary instructional techniques: (1) didactic instruction; (2) intellectual coaching; and (3) seminar dialogue. Funding was secured, extensive training was provided, and Paideia arrived at the school. As a result, the SIC's school became the first nationally-certified Paideia school in South Carolina. *(Meadowfield Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1, 2008).*

Additional Resource

Paideia Active Learning *(http://www.paideia.org/).*

8. Arts Integration

Simply the Best. To celebrate its school's arts integration instruction, this SIC organizes an annual event called Simply the Best Academic Showcase and Fine Arts Celebration. After enjoying a spaghetti dinner, families and community members can choose from among many different demonstration sessions going on throughout the school. Students and their teachers showcase their work in the visual arts, dance, music, and other fine arts; sports such as bass fishing and fencing; and academics. Parents have an opportunity ask questions and celebrate their children's talents together with the whole community. *(South Florence High SIC, Florence Public School District One, 2017).*

Bringing arts from community to classroom. In support of its school's commitment to integrated arts education, this SIC developed community partnerships with local arts organizations to enrich classroom learning. Its partnership with Engaging Creative Minds resulted in local artists coming to the school and providing hands-on learning opportunities for students. The SICs partnership with the Charleston Museum led to the development of a "Traveling Trunks" project that will benefit the entire school district. Teachers at the school are working with museum staff to create trunks filled with artifacts, interactive lesson plans, art activities or crafts, and other resources to supplement classroom instruction. *(Jennie Moore Elementary SIC, Charleston County School District, 2016).*

9. Student Leadership Development

Leadership Academy. This SIC partnered with its local Chamber of Commerce, which already sponsored a "Leadership Grand Strand" program for adults, to develop a special Leadership Academy for 4th and 5th graders at their school. Interested students were required to apply for admission to the program through a multi-step application process that involved gathering letters of recommendation, creating a portfolio illustrating their existing leadership skills, and a semi-formal interview with community business leaders. The school district superintendent was the guest speaker at the Academy's kick-off breakfast for participating students. Students participated in team-building and leadership-based activities and wrote letters to individuals whom they viewed as leaders during the three additional Academy sessions held during the school year. *(St. James Elementary SIC, Horry County Schools, 2017).*

10. Academic Support for At-Risk Students

Highway to Higher Education. This SIC partnered with its school to develop a program called Highway to Higher Education (HHE), offering targeted support to diploma-tracked ninth graders who were due to turn sixteen before the end of the first quarter of their ninth-grade year. The SIC wrote a successful grant proposal to the SC Department of Education for an Education and Economic Development Act/Preparing College and Career-Ready Graduates grant to fund the initiative. HHE offered these students a mastery-based curriculum that included the opportunity to earn eleven credits and junior status in one calendar year, with continued opportunity to graduate in 3 years. *(South Florence High SIC, Florence Public School District One, 2018).*

Many thanks to the SICs whose work is featured in this Collection:

Baron DeKalb SIC, Kershaw County School District

Blythewood High SIC, Richland School District 2

Bookman Road Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2

Brennen Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1

Brooklyn Springs Elementary SIC, Lancaster County School District

Buena Vista Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools

Burgess Elementary SIC, Horry County Schools

Camden Elementary School for the Creative Arts SIC, Kershaw County School District

Chapin Elementary School, School District 5 of Lexington and Richland Counties

Chapin Intermediate School, School District 5 of Lexington and Richland Counties

The Children's School at Sylvia Circle SIC, Rock Hill Schools

Chukker Creek Elementary SIC, Aiken County Public School District

Doby's Mill Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District

Eagle Nest Elementary SIC, Dorchester School District 2

Ebinport Elementary SIC, Rock Hill Schools

Harbison West Elementary SIC, School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties

Hunt Meadows Elementary SIC, Anderson School District 1

Indian Land Middle SIC, Lancaster County School District

Jennie Moore Elementary SIC, Charleston County School District

Jesse Boyd Elementary SIC, Spartanburg School District 7

Lake Forest Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools

Laurel Hill Primary SIC, Charleston County School District

Manchester Elementary SIC, Sumter School District

Mauldin High SIC, Greenville County Schools

Meadowfield Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1

North Elementary SIC, Lancaster County School District

North Augusta Elementary SIC, Aiken County Public School District

North Augusta High SIC, Aiken County Public School District

Nursery Road Elementary SIC, School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties

Pineview Elementary SIC, Lexington School District 2

Ridge View High SIC, Richland School District 2

River Springs Elementary SIC, School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties

Round Top Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2

Rudolph Gordon Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools

Saluda Trail Middle SIC, Rock Hill Schools

South Florence High SIC, Florence Public School District 1

South Pointe High SIC, Rock Hill Schools

St. James Elementary SIC, Horry County Schools

Stone Academy of Communication Arts SIC, Greenville County Schools

Sue Cleveland Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools

Sullivan's Island Elementary SIC, Charleston County School District

Wade Hampton High SIC, Greenville County Schools