

SIC ELECTION GUIDE



SIC Election Guide

Introduction

This booklet contains a brief summary of state law requirements and recommended practices for School Improvement Council (SIC) elections.

Types and Frequency of SIC Elections

State law requires that SICs, together with their schools, conduct the following types of elections every year:

- Elections for parent representatives
- Elections for teacher representatives
- Elections for student representatives
(required only in schools serving grade 9 or above)

SICs must conduct elections for as many vacancies as need to be filled in order to meet the membership requirements in their local bylaws and state law.

State law requires that an SIC must have at least the following number of each type of elected members:

Primary, Elementary, and Middle School SICs:

- At least two elected parents
- At least two elected teachers

High School SICs (and other schools that include grade 9 or above):

- At least two elected parents
- At least two elected teachers
- At least two elected students

Deadline for SIC Elections is October 15

The law states that SIC elections must be completed by October 15 each year. As long as this requirement is met, schools can decide whether they prefer to hold elections at the beginning of the new school year or the preceding spring (May-June).

If SIC elections are held in the spring, it is important to ensure that parents and students who will be entering your school in the fall have an opportunity to participate.

Elected SIC members serve two-year terms

The term of office for elected parent, teacher, and student representatives is two years.¹

Staggered Terms of Office and Term Limits

State law directs SICs to stagger the terms of office of its elected members so that about half its members are up for election each year. This ensures that there will always be several experienced elected members on the SIC each year to guide newly elected members.

¹ The exception is a parent of a student who is in his/her last year of enrollment at a school and will not have any students enrolled the following year. In such a case, the parent is elected only for a one-year term. SC Code of Laws, section 59-20-60(6).

Example: How to stagger terms when an SIC has not previously held regular annual elections:

The newly constructed Marvelous Middle School is holding parent elections for the first time. The SIC's bylaws require that there be three parent representatives on the SIC. In order to stagger the terms of office, one of the three newly elected parents will have to serve a shorter one-year term. The parents who receive the three highest vote totals will draw straws to see which parent will be assigned the one-year term.

At the beginning of the next school year, the parent who was assigned the one-year term will have to run for re-election. The winner of that election will get a full two-year term. The terms of office for elected parents will remain staggered thereafter as long as the SIC

State law does not place any limits on the number of times that elected members can run for re-election to the SIC. SICs can limit the total number of terms or the number of consecutive terms that an elected member may serve by placing a limit in their local bylaws.

SIC Parent Elections

Eligibility Requirements:

Any parent, guardian or other individual who serves as a student's primary caregiver is eligible to serve as a parent representative on an SIC for as long as he/she has at least one child enrolled in the school. An individual who no longer has a child enrolled in the school will immediately become ineligible to serve as a parent representative, even if the individual has not completed his/her two-year term.

Parents can nominate themselves or be nominated by other parents.

Methods for Electing Parent Representatives

State law does not require that SICs follow any particular method of conducting parent nominations and elections. An SIC should create a method that is fair and that is intended to encourage large and diverse numbers of parents to participate. The

method should be clearly outlined in the SIC's bylaws or placed in writing and approved by the full SIC.

SICs have had success holding parent nominations and elections during school events that are usually well attended by parents such as an annual spring fair, schedule pick-up day, back-to-school celebration, open house, PTA/PTO meeting, or an athletic event.

It is important that an SIC provide parents with plenty of advance notice of the procedures for nominating and voting for candidates. SICs are encouraged to use more than one of the many methods of communication available to reach all parents, such as the school website, the school's social media pages, the school newsletter, emails, telephone calls, and flyers sent home with students and posted around the school.

SIC Teacher Elections

Eligibility Requirements:

Any teacher who is currently assigned to the school is eligible to serve. A teacher that is reassigned to another school may not continue to serve as a teacher representative even if the teacher has not completed his/her term of office. Teachers may nominate themselves or be nominated by a fellow teacher.

Methods for Electing Teacher Representatives

It is recommended that outgoing SIC teacher representatives work together with the principal to conduct teacher nominations and elections. Teachers should be nominated in advance and faculty members should be notified of the names of the candidates prior to the election.

For most schools, the best time to conduct teacher elections is during a regularly scheduled faculty meeting or other event

that all teachers are required to attend. Outgoing SIC teacher representatives can supervise collecting and counting the ballots and announce the names of the winners.

SIC Student Elections

Eligibility Requirements:

Any student currently enrolled in school and attending classes may serve as an SIC representative. An individual who is no longer enrolled as a student in the school may not continue to serve as a student representative, even if the individual has not completed his/her two-year term.

For SICs that have four or more student representative positions, it is recommended that at least one position be assigned to represent each grade. In a high school, for example, each grade (9-12) would elect its own SIC representative. This ensures that there is balanced representation of all grades on the SIC. For SICs that do not have enough student positions to represent each

grade, the lower grades (9-10) and upper grades (11-12) may be combined to elect their own SIC student representative.

Alternatively, an SIC can treat student representatives as "at-large," meaning that all student representatives are elected by and represent the entire student body.

Methods for Electing Student Representatives

Elections for student SIC representatives are usually held when other class and student body officers are chosen. SICs should avoid the practice of simply assigning a student who already holds a school office (such as the student body president) to serve as an SIC student representative. SIC student positions are intended to provide diverse student viewpoints and give more students an opportunity to serve in leadership positions.

Notifying the Winners and Announcing the Results to the School Community

It is important that the SIC notify all candidates of the results of the election and thank the candidates who were not selected for their willingness to serve.

There may be other ways that these individuals can help your SIC; let them know that you need their continued support and, if appropriate, encourage them to run again next year.

SICs should also make sure that the school community is notified of the names of their newly elected members. Your SIC may choose to wait until all elections and appointments for the year have been concluded and announce the names of all new SIC members at the same time.

Posting SIC Membership to SC-SIC Member Network by November 15

Schools are required by state law to report their SIC membership to the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) every year.

Schools do this using the online *SC-SIC Member Network*. The *SC-SIC Member Network* may be accessed using links located on the SC-SIC website (<http://sic.sc.gov>) or directly at <http://sic.ed.sc.edu/network>. The school principal together with the SIC District Contact are responsible for seeing that SIC membership is reported to the *SC-SIC Member Network* no later than November 15, the deadline set in state law.

For more information, visit the SC-SIC website at sic.sc.gov or contact a member of the SC-SIC staff by phone at (803)-777-7658 (toll free at 1-800-868-2232) or by email at sic@mailbox.sc.edu.