

**THE DICK AND TUNKY RILEY AWARD FOR  
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL EXCELLENCE:**

**A Collection of Selected SIC Activities**

**Volume II**

**The School Environment**

**Published Spring 2016**



## Message from the SC-SIC Executive Director

Dear SIC Member:

Across South Carolina each year, nearly 15,000 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.

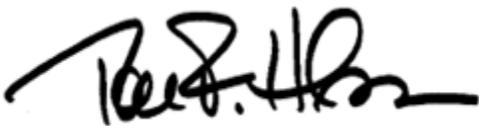
This series of six publications developed by the SC School Improvement Council is intended to provide examples of what some effective SICs have accomplished and to offer ideas in a number of topic areas so that your SIC can undertake its work in a planned, thoughtful, and meaningful fashion.

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!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom F. Hudson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "H".

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 before 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 in order 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 in order 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**

#### **The School Environment**

##### **1. School Building and Grounds**

**Safety inspections.** In response to concerns expressed by staff, parents, and students, this SIC instituted an annual safety inspection of the school building and grounds. The SIC includes students in the inspection process to help identify problems that SIC members might not otherwise be aware of, such as broken water fountains, broken science lab equipment, and broken locker room equipment. On its first inspection, the SIC team identified serious structural damage to the overhang outside the bus loop. The SIC's report on this generated an immediate response from the district. (*H.E. McCracken Middle SIC, Beaufort County School District, 2016*).

**Positive messaging on campus.** This SIC initiated a successful drive to paint their school's logo and slogan, "Simply the Best," on a water tower that overlooks the campus. The SIC collaborated with school alumni, the school's parent/teacher/student association, the athletic booster club, and student organizations to put together the \$7,500 needed for the project. (*South Florence High SIC, Florence Public School District One, 2016*).

**Multitude of facility and grounds improvements.** This SIC started by taking photos and making lists of the many areas needing upgrades and repairs and presenting their findings to school and district administrators. The SIC also sought parent input on the school's functionality and appearance. In response, the district drafted an architectural plan that would bring the school up to the level of the other high schools in the district. Action was taken to improve the campus in many different areas. Examples include removal and repair of portables, removal of rusty and damaged tables and seats in the outdoor eating area, and the installation of external lights and replacement of bulbs so that the school was properly lit and safer for nighttime activities. (*Ridge View High SIC, Richland School District 2, 2014*).

**Athletic fields and sports-complex, parking lot redesign, fencing, and media center upgrade.** During the course of participating in an attendance rezoning process for its school, the SIC raised district awareness of the many improvements that were needed at their school. The school subsequently received a complete renovation of athletic fields and a sports complex comparable to newer schools in the district; a parking lot redesign with new signage, a new fence in front of the campus, and upgrades to the media center and other areas within the school. (*Richland Northeast High SIC, Richland School District 2, 2013*).

**Rain Garden and Habitat Garden.** This SIC invited an expert from a local university to discuss ideas for making environmental and aesthetic improvements to the school grounds. Using a Sustainability Initiative grant from Wal-Mart to fund their work, the SIC partnered with the university, county storm water agency employees, students, parents, and faculty to install a Rain Garden on school grounds. As grant funds remained after the garden was completed, the SIC established a committee to study how best to use these funds and recruited a parent who was also a local landscaper to develop a BEST master garden plan. The remaining funds were used to create the next garden within the master plan - a Habitat Garden. The SIC continued to seek funding to add additional gardens called for in the master garden plan including an Art

Garden, Sharecropper's Garden, and Carolina Fence Garden. (*Burgess Elementary SIC, Horry County Schools, 2011*).

**Beautification and environmentally-friendly improvements.** This SIC developed and assisted in implementing a plan to both beautify their school and to make environmentally-friendly improvements. This included improvements to the school's storm water management, creating a method of collecting rain to irrigate a future school garden, and sponsoring an Action for a Cleaner Tomorrow training to educate teachers on classroom tools available from their city to use in lesson plans on environmental awareness. The SIC also sponsored a Saturday Clean Up event in which faculty, staff, parents, and community volunteers collaborated in cleaning school grounds, updating interior décor, organizing classrooms, and, in partnership with a local church ministry, enhanced both the exterior and interior school environments. (*North Augusta Elementary SIC, Aiken County Public School District, 2011*).

**Improved sidewalks, fresh paint, additional lighting, and restroom renovations.** This SIC spearheaded several school beautification efforts. The projects included enhancing the appearance of the front of the school by repairing damaged sidewalks and planting flowers and shrubbery. Another project involved expanding and renovating the faculty parking area, painting the interior and exterior of the building, installing additional high powered lighting, benches, and new early childhood playground equipment. After the results of its parent survey indicated that restroom renovation was a high priority, the SIC took photos of the poor restroom conditions and brought them to the attention of the district's Operations Department. In response, the restrooms were painted, sinks replaced, and floors were power washed. (*The Children's School at Sylvia Circle SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2010, 2009*).

**Earth Day community/school work day.** This SIC involved parents, students, and community members in an Earth Day celebration by holding a community workday for campus beautification. SIC members obtained donations of landscaping materials and other resources from local businesses. Teams of parents, teachers, students, and community members planted, weeded, and cleaned various areas to enhance the beauty of the campus. (*Round Top Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2, 2010*).

**School Grounds Improvement Days, donations of funds, plants, supplies.** This SIC's School Grounds and Facilities committee established a partnership with a local landscaping service that was willing to volunteer its expertise, equipment, and assistance in beautifying the school grounds. The SIC sponsored three School Grounds Improvement Days at which parents worked to improve the appearance of school grounds. The SIC committee wrote a grant proposal to a local gardening club to obtain funds for improving the school's central entrance area and procured donations from Lowes of plants, mulch, and additional supplies to aid in grounds improvements. (*Camden Elementary School for the Creative Arts SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2010, 2008*).

**Take Pride (in the Outside) Day and grant funding.** This SIC spearheaded a successful effort to obtain Palmetto Pride grant monies to improve school grounds. SIC members also coordinated the school's first Take Pride (in the Outside) Day which attracted over 140 volunteers from across the community. Students were enlisted to write invitations to community groups and government officials. In the weeks leading up to the day, students also participated in a Take Pride poster contest and enjoyed an anti-litter puppet show presented by a local marionette theatre. (*Bookman Road Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2, 2008*).

**Quarterly school work days.** SIC members toured the school facility and documented areas where improvements were needed. The SIC then scheduled quarterly work days and completed tasks ranging from landscaping to repainting the lines in the parking lot. (*Chukker Creek Elementary SIC, Aiken County Public School District, 2007*).

**School life photo display.** Twenty 11 x 14 color photos of student activities were selected, framed, and hung in the hallways of the school. These included pictures of academic, athletic, social, and community involvement. A local photo studio contributed a portion of the printing cost. (*Wade Hampton High SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2007*).

**Main lobby beautification.** This SIC recruited additional parents and teachers to form a School Beautification Committee. The committee transformed the school lobby into an inviting space by having it painted to resemble a country flower garden. It used discounts from businesses and a service learning grant from the district to purchase live palms, birdhouses and three-dimensional butterflies for the walls. The SIC also partnered with a local greenhouse to supply fresh flowering plants for the school's main office. A drawing was held at the end of every month and the plant awarded to a staff member with perfect attendance. (*Manchester Elementary SIC, Sumter County School District, 2004*).

**Welcoming signage and banner.** This SIC advocated successfully for the installation of new, welcoming directional signage to replace existing signs that were too small or incomplete to be effective. The SIC also selected a student design for the school's new international welcome banner. (*Ridge View High SIC, Richland School District 2, 2004*).

### ***Additional Resources***

Lowe's Toolbox for Education grant program (<http://www.toolboxforeducation.com/>).

## **2. Traffic/Pedestrian/ Bus Safety**

**Bus safety.** This SIC became aware that overcrowding in buses was causing some students to have to stand or sit in the aisles while the bus was moving. In addition, the SIC was concerned about the age of the bus fleet (several buses were as old as 27 years), and problems with buses emitting large amounts of black smoke. In response, the SIC developed an awareness and advocacy campaign to address these safety issues. They have meet with members of the school board, district staff, representatives of bus company, and neighboring schools to discuss these problems. Although the SIC's campaign is a work in progress, it has already prompted district and bus representatives to urge drivers not to leave school grounds unless all students are properly seated, and several of the oldest buses in the fleet have been replaced. The SIC is continuing to urge parents and student to report any unsafe practices or maintenance issues to bus officials. (*H.E. McCracken Middle SIC, Beaufort County School District, 2016*).

**Traffic flow, parking lot.** Collaborative efforts between city and school officials and this SIC resulted in a number of improvements to traffic safety. Additional paved entrances and exits were constructed along with curbing and grassy areas to aid traffic flow. The SIC also invited representatives of law enforcement to discuss and propose actions to address safety issues created by use of a parking lot located across the street from the school. (*North Augusta High SIC, Aiken County Public School District, 2015*).

**Safety audit walk.** This SIC and school partnered with the SC Safe Routes to School to perform a safety audit walk. The audit was led by representatives of DHEC and involved examining the safety of the school's drop-off and pick-up procedures as well as observing student/driver behaviors during these times. Parent representatives, school staff, law enforcement, traffic engineers, planners and public works employees, and public health professionals were invited to attend the audit and provide input. (*Doby's Mill Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2014*).

**Car rider drop-off/pick-up procedures.** This SIC worked to improve the safety of their school's car rider drop-off and pick-up procedures. The school's No Cell Phone Use policy was displayed more prominently, directional signs were added, and school roads were utilized more effectively. (*Okatie Elementary SIC, Beaufort County School District, 2014*).

**Signage, school zone lights, crosswalks.** This SIC worked with school and district administrators to improve traffic and pedestrian safety. Their joint efforts led to roadway and directional signage improvements and the addition of flashing school zone lights and a fully-marked school crosswalk. (*Ridge View High SIC, Richland School District 2, 2014*).

**Pedestrian safety, improper parking.** Working with the PTA, school administrators, and the nearby community, this SIC took steps to modify drop-off and pick-up procedures, have fences installed around the driveway, bushes planted around the school perimeter, and signage erected to increase pedestrian safety and prevent improper parking. The SIC collaborated with SC Safe Routes to School to improve walking routes and better utilize crossing guards. It also partnered with surrounding businesses and a neighboring church to alleviate unauthorized off-campus student pick-up. (*Brushy Creek Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2013*).

**Signage, traffic light timing, additional bus route.** This SIC partnered with district, city, county, and state officials to improve student safety in travelling to and from school. The state added large Children Walking signs, repainted street markings, and added No Turn on Red signs. The county adjusted the timing and settings of traffic lights to help children cross major streets. The district added an additional bus route to eliminate the most hazardous walking routes. Local officials worked to add crosswalks to a major road. The school purchased stop signs and reflective vests for staff. A key piece of the SIC's work was identifying and coordinating the efforts of these different entities toward the single goal of increasing student safety. (*Sullivan Middle SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2011*).

**New traffic lights and traffic guard.** This SIC worked with the district, county council, and other community groups to discuss possible solutions to improve traffic flow and safety around the school. The SIC then wrote to their representative on the county council to explain the challenges and propose a suggested solution. As a result, a new traffic light was installed and a traffic guard was added to direct traffic in and out of the school. (*Round Top Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2, 2010*).

**New walking corridor, speed zone.** This SIC met regularly with parents, city traffic engineers, and police to address critical safety concerns. As a result of the SIC's efforts, barrier poles and painted cross walks were placed along a newly designated walking corridor to better separate walkers from the carpool line. A new speed zone was also designated to slow traffic passing by and approaching this congested area. (*Stone Academy of Communication Arts SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2010*).

**Drop-off/pick-up procedures.** SIC members consulted with local law enforcement officials, district staff, and SC Department of Education personnel to explore issues of school safety as it related to current school facilities. As a result, changes were implemented to student delivery and pick-up procedures and meetings were initiated to consider changes to school driveways. (*Chukker Creek Elementary SIC, Aiken County Public School District, 2007*).

**Sidewalks, traffic lights, railroad crossing.** SIC members talked to local media to raise awareness of the dangers that a lack of sidewalks posed to students walking to their new school building. Thereafter, the city and county pooled their funds to construct sidewalks that connected nearby streets to the school property. A developer also agreed to build sidewalks tying his new housing complex to the school's sidewalks. The developer paid for a traffic study in order to speed up the installation of traffic lights on side roads that connected with major roads near the school. The SIC also worked with the state highway department, CSX Railroad, and their state senator to eliminate the hazards posed to car riders by a nearby railroad crossing that lacked gates. (*South Pointe High SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2007*).

### ***Additional Resources***

South Carolina Safe Routes to School Resource Center (<http://www.scsaferoutes.org/>).

## **3. Trusting Relationships/Positive Role Models**

**Teen Achievers and Call Me MISTER mentors.** This SIC partnered with two local community programs to plan and implement mentoring programs for at-risk students. Volunteers from the SIC, using a curriculum developed by the YMCA Teen Achievers program, visited students in a designated classroom twice monthly. They focused on building trusting relationships and providing guidance in areas such as critical thinking, goal setting, and conflict management. Another group of volunteers from the Call Me MISTER program at Clemson University visited a second designated classroom twice monthly to focus on building student self-worth, trust, and other important life skills. A new after school club, The Achievers, was formed so that students and mentors could continue this work after students moved to new classrooms. The PTSA donated the funds needed to support the creation of the new club. (*J.L. Mann High SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2015*).

**WATCH D.O.G.S.** WATCH D.O.G.S. are fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other father figures who volunteer for at least one day each year at an official WATCH D.O.G.S. school. During the day, volunteers may read and work on flash cards with students, play at recess, eat lunch with students, watch the school entrances and hallways, assist with traffic flow, and take on other assigned activities where they engage not only with their own child but other students as well. (*Myrtle Beach Cluster SIC, Horry County Schools, 2015*).

**Beau Tie Club.** This SIC is a sponsor of this mentoring program for fourth and fifth grade at-risk boys. It focuses on character building and accountability. SIC volunteers assist students by supplying dress shirts, teaching students how to tie their ties, and providing transportation so that students can participate in community events such as the annual Catfish Stomp parade. (*Doby's Mill Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2014*).

**Ladies' and Gentlemen's Clubs mentoring programs.** This SIC, in partnership with school staff and community leaders, identified and assisted in the implementation of a mentoring curriculum for a Ladies and Gentlemen's Club. Developed by the Peters Group, the

programs focus on empowering boys and girls by growing their self-esteem and confidence. (*Okatie Elementary SIC, Beaufort County School District, 2014*).

**Hand in Hand Together.** This SIC recruited volunteers to assist selected 5th grade students with academic and behavior challenges through their local United Way's Hand in Hand Together mentoring program. (*Baron DeKalb Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2012*).

**Lunch Buddies.** Two SICs worked to recruit volunteers for their schools' Lunch Buddies program, a program that matches volunteer community mentors with students for regular one-hour lunch meetings at school. (*Baron DeKalb Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District, 2012*), (*A.J. Lewis Greenview SIC, Richland School District 1, 2006*).

**Family Night for students from local Children's Home.** Approximately 20 students who resided at a local children's home were not able to participate in evening school activities such as Family Nights at local restaurants. With the Home's permission, SIC members took the students to several Family Nights during the year. The PTO donated funds to cover the cost of the students' meals. (*Brennen Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1, 2011*).

**Bridges.** This SIC spearheaded adoption of the Bridges program in which teachers are assigned a small number of students to advise and mentor. This gives students an opportunity to develop a trusting relationship with at least one caring adult at the school that they can always talk to about their schoolwork or any other issues that they need help with. (*Morningside Middle SIC, Charleston County School District, 2009*).

**Comprehensive mentoring for at-risk students.** This SIC developed and implemented a mentoring program to provide at-risk students with positive male role models, support and guidance from caring adults, assistance with academic goals, and encouragement to stay in school and away from risky behaviors. The program has a character-building component that is delivered by volunteer area pastors. Students can also attend specialized group sessions in health and hygiene, peer support groups, and individual counseling. The SIC recruited two board certified physicians to address student hygiene and social needs and a deputy sheriff to address issues related to gang violence and drug avoidance. The SIC sponsored two lunches for mentors, mentees, and their families. Students also participate in a variety of fun athletic and social activities with their mentors. (*J. Paul Truluck Middle SIC, Florence School District 3, 2007*).

**Local college basketball team mentors.** An SIC member/dad organized a male mentoring program that paired dads from the school with students in grades 3-6. Mentors committed to meet with their student once a week at the school. Eventually, they were joined every week by the Wofford College men's basketball team and coaching staff. Students who earned sufficient points by getting good grades or improving their attitude or behavior were rewarded with field trips, including trips to Wofford basketball games. Students joined their players/mentors on the court at these events for special recognition. The program inspired the creation of a similar program for girls in partnership with the Wofford ladies basketball team, sorority members, and Converse College students. (*Pine Street Elementary SIC, Spartanburg School District 7, 2007*).

**D.A.D.S. (Dads Are Doing Something).** This SIC and school's parent educator worked together to create a D.A.D.S. program at their school. D.A.D.S. is a group of fathers who provide

students with positive male role models while supporting academics. The group met monthly to discuss ways that they could be of assistance inside and outside of school. D.A.D.S. participants ate lunch with students, chaperoned field trips, and several became "homeroom dads." Several D.A.D.S. members were paired with a teacher to mentor students who needed extra support. D.A.D.S. also developed an outdoor courtyard area at the school to enhance instructional activities that promote learning in a natural environment. (*A.J. Lewis Greenview Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1, 2004, 2005*).

**Grandparent program.** This program encourages non-traditional guardians to be more involved in the education of students. Foster grandparents volunteered daily by mentoring, providing classroom tutoring, serving as lunch partners, and providing nurturing and support to students. (*A.J. Lewis Greenview Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1, 2005*).

### ***Additional Resources***

Be A Mentor Now (Charleston area Lunch Buddies)  
(<http://www.beamentornow.org/programs/lunch-buddies/>).

Clemson University (Call Me MISTER) (<http://www.clemson.edu/hehd/departments/education/research/callmemister/>).

National Center for Fathering (W.A.T.C.H. D.O.G.S.) (<http://www.fathers.com/watchdogs/>).

National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University (mentor/tutor programs)  
(<http://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/mentoring-tutoring/>).

National Mentoring Partnership (standards and best practices in mentoring programs)  
([http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring\\_1222.pdf](http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_1222.pdf)).

Stephen Peters Group (Gentlemen and Ladies Clubs nationally)  
(<http://stephenpetersgroup.com/the-gentlemens-club-gc/>); (<http://stephenpetersgroup.com/the-ladies-club-lc/>).

YMCA Greenville (YMCA Teen Achievers) (<http://www.ymcagreenville.org/teen-achievers.php>).

## **4. Rewarding Positive Behavior and Achievement.**

**Student of the Month recognitions.** This SIC partnered with its school's PTO to hold "Student of the Month" recognition events for students and their families during each month's SIC meeting. Students are recognized for outstanding achievements, strength of character, and leadership skills. The principal and SIC officers award students with Certificates of Achievement and students and their families have their picture taken at the event. The day after, PTO members deliver treats during class time to the winning students. (*H.E. McCracken Middle SIC, Beaufort County School District, 2016*).

**Student recognition luncheons.** This SIC partnered with local businesses to sponsor quarterly student recognition lunches. Faculty members each awarded one lunch ticket every nine weeks to a student who had diligently worked to improve a low grade, shown a pattern of improved attendance, or shown a pattern of improved, responsible behavior. In addition to a

pizza lunch, the students were allowed to socialize during an extended lunch period and were recognized during school announcements. (*North Augusta High SIC, Aiken County Public School District, 2013*).

**SOAR HIGH program.** This program rewarded students for displaying positive character traits and high academic achievement. Students earned Falcon Bucks when they dressed in academic attire, displayed good behavior, or exhibited one of the character traits in the school's SOAR motto (Seek Excellence, Opt for Good Manners, Activate Learning and Listening Skills, and Respect Self and Others). Students could redeem Falcon Bucks for prizes donated by school business partners. In addition, students nominated by their teachers for modeling positive character traits were invited with their families to events such as ice cream socials or pizza parties. Students who achieved high scores or significant improvement on state assessment tests or who ended the year without any disciplinary referrals participated in special trips to locations such as Atlanta, Washington, D.C., or a local theme park. (*Chestnut Oaks Middle SIC, Sumter County School District, 2010*).

**Panther ROAR recognitions.** Students received Panther ROAR awards (Really Outstanding Academic Recognition) for accomplishments such as earning straight A's or all A's and B's or for perfect or excellent attendance. The program also recognized students nominated by teachers in the TRACKS category (Trying Readily and Consistently Keen Students). (*Pineview Elementary SIC, Lexington School District 2, 2008*).

**Bell Bucks.** This SIC initiated the Bell Bucks program to reward students who successfully completed assignments and performed responsible tasks. Bell Bucks (actual paper bills featuring portraits of school administrators) were awarded for actions like good classroom behavior, perfect attendance, helping other students, and improved grades. Students could use Bell Bucks to purchase dance tickets, candy, and food and drinks at special events, homework passes, and admission to special reward parties. Students also learned about basic principles of a market economy as the prices of Bell Bucks merchandise went up and down relative to supply and demand. (*Martha Dendy 6th Grade/Bell Street Middle SIC, Laurens School District 56, 2006*).

**First semester student awards banquet.** This SIC worked together with the school administration and the Office of Food Services to sponsor a free awards banquet for students and their parents. Students received awards in categories such as stellar academic and athletic performance, exemplary conduct within the character education program standards, perfect attendance for the first nine weeks of the semester, and specialized team-sponsored awards. (*Martha Dendy 6th Grade/Bell Street Middle SIC, Laurens School District 56, 2006*).

**Academic lettering program.** This SIC sought guidance in developing an academic lettering program by communicating with schools that already had such programs. The SIC also sought student opinions on the letter design and identified business partners from the community to fund the first year of the program. The letters were awarded to 160 students at a special ceremony. Students could earn bars each year to add to their letter throughout their high-school career. (*West-Oak High SIC, Oconee County School District, 2004*).

### ***Additional Resources***

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) National Technical Assistance Center (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs) (<http://www.pbis.org/>).

SC PBIS Center at the SC Department of Education (<http://ed.sc.gov/>).

## **5. Academic Attire/Uniforms**

**New academic attire program.** This SIC and school administrators partnered to create an academic attire program. Students chose the color polo shirt they wanted to represent their grade together with either khaki or blue pants. Students dressed in proper academic attire were randomly awarded Falcon Bucks, which could be redeemed for prizes donated by the school's business partners. (*Chestnut Oaks Middle SIC, Sumter County School District, 2010*).

**Incentives for compliance.** This SIC developed a program to increase student compliance with existing school uniform policies. It recruited two business partners to provide incentive awards for students wearing their uniforms in school, resulting in a significant increase in compliance. (*Arden Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1, 2006*).

**Comprehensive uniform program.** This SIC learned through a parent survey that a large majority of parents favored instituting a school uniform policy. The SIC participated in selecting the uniforms, making sure that they were available for purchase locally as well as by mail, and that they were affordable for parents. The SIC also instituted a used uniform sale. Parents were asked to donate gently used uniforms which were then resold at a cost of \$1.00 or less. Proceeds of the sale were donated to the PTO which used the monies to assist low-income families in purchasing new uniforms for their children. The SIC also supported and helped to define TEAM Wednesday, a weekly event on which everyone - staff, faculty, and students - dress in uniform. The SIC set a goal of 98% compliance, which was met consistently. (*Lake Carolina Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2, 2005*).

**Building school community support for uniform policy.** This SIC conducted a one and a half- year campaign to build support among all parts of the school community for a school uniform policy. The SIC started by doing a survey of faculty and staff which showed that 96.7% favored uniforms. The SIC then developed guidelines and standards for uniforms, located vendors, developed a plan to assist low-income parents in complying with the new standards, and researched ideas on how to present the plan to parents. After obtaining the approval of the School Board, the SIC took its plan to parents. This step-by-step approach paid off as parents have been supportive of the plan and compliance has been at or near 100%. (*Saluda Trail Middle SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2005*).

### ***Additional Resources***

Education Partnerships, Inc. (2009). Research Brief: Student Dress Codes and Uniforms (includes tips on developing a uniform program)  
(<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED537953.pdf>).

## **6. Respect for Diversity**

**Diversity retreat for students and community leaders.** Several SIC members (including a student member) organized this weekend retreat in response to concerns about high levels of disciplinary referrals and the general lack of understanding of racial, ethnic, and cultural differences among students. The retreat was held at Clemson University and focused on team-building activities and developing a framework for longer-term solutions to these issues. (*Greenville High SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2009*).

**Peace Flag.** This SIC wanted to encourage students to develop respect for diversity while coexisting in a peaceful environment. In response to a suggestion by the principal, the SIC created a Peace Flag for their school. The flag is intended to help students focus on their ability to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner and to work toward goals together. (*Lake Carolina Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2, 2005*).

### ***Additional Resources***

PTO Today, Multicultural (resources and ideas for events and activities celebrating diverse cultures) (<http://www.ptotoday.com/multicultural>).

## **7. Positive Environment for Teachers**

**Teacher appreciation luncheon.** This SIC sponsored a staff appreciation luncheon designed to improve teacher spirit and morale and improve school climate generally. (*Arden Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1, 2006*).

**On-site child care for teachers.** This SIC was instrumental in bringing an on-site day care center to their school for children of school faculty and staff. This was one of several strategies implemented in an effort to attract and retain good teachers. (*Dutch Fork High SIC, School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties, 2003*).

## **8. Attendance/tardy rate**

**Soar High with Falcon Pride attendance initiative.** This SIC used the school's new motto "Soar High with Falcon Pride" to create a poster campaign throughout the school with the message: *Attendance is Important - Take Pride in Attendance!* SIC members also set up data displays at parent events during the course of the year so that parents could see how much progress was being made in improving attendance and tardy rates and reducing loss of instructional time. (*Chestnut Oaks Middle SIC, Sumter County School District, 2010*).

**Celebration Day.** This SIC helped to create a CELEBRATION DAY! reward program that tracked classroom absence and tardy rates and rewarded winning classrooms with a snow cone party. (*Pineview Elementary SIC, Lexington School District 2, 2007*).

**Attendance Blitz and Race for Attendance.** Inspired by their district's annual Attendance Blitz, the SIC sponsored additional activities to increase student pride in school attendance. These included a poster campaign using the school logo and the message: *Attendance Is Important - Have Pride in Attendance!*, holding a monthly school Secret Attendance Blitz (the grade level with the best attendance rate on the day of a secret blitz won special honors and a banner on their door), distributing backpack medals for perfect attendance and on-time arrival, and posting data displays at PTA events showing the school's progress in improving attendance. The highlight of the program was the Race for Attendance. Each class had 20 slots on a large poster in the school office. Each time a class had perfect attendance with no unexcused late arrivals, the race car for its class moved ahead one slot. The first class to reach the finish line won incentive prizes. (*Taylor's Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2007*).

### ***Additional Resources***

Attendance Works (resources in English and Spanish) (<http://www.attendanceworks.org/>).

## **9. Alternatives to out-of-class/out-of-school suspensions**

**Crossroads Program.** This SIC supported development of the Crossroads Program, which began as a 15 day after school intervention program that served as an alternative to out-of-school suspensions. Over time, it evolved into a means of addressing student involvement in gang-related activities and encouraging high-risk students to remain in school and graduate. Members of the local police department together with other community agencies such as DHEC, a local counseling center, and a regional education coalition partnered to sustain implementation of this program. (*Marlboro High SIC, Marlboro County School District, 2007*).

**Changes to lock-out policy for tardy students.** This SIC studied the impact of a school policy requiring that students be locked out of class when they were tardy. An SIC committee of faculty, students, and parents researched how other schools handled this problem and developed a report on how many student hours were lost at their school as a result of the tardy/lock-out policy. The committee's work was successful in prompting changes to the policy that ultimately reduced the loss of instructional time. (*Ridge View High SIC, Richland School District 2, 2004*).

**Twilight School.** This SIC was concerned about the loss of instructional time resulting from student suspensions. In response, the administration initiated the Twilight School program, which allowed students to serve suspension time in the evenings rather than missing daytime instructional time. (*Dutch Fork High SIC, School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties, 2003*).

## **10. Service Projects**

**HOOT Bag.** This SIC collaborated with the PTO, a local church, and the Lowcountry Food Bank on the HOOT Bag program, which provided 20 low-income families at the school with a week's worth of food each month. The school's guidance counselor and social worker assisted the SIC in identifying families in need. The families then came to pick up their HOOT bags from the school each month. (*Okatie Elementary SIC, Beaufort County School District, 2014*).

**Book drive for Latino Family Outreach program.** In celebration of National Book Week, the SIC organized a book drive for the Latino Family Outreach program. Children of families participating in the program could check the books out from the Café Cultura Latino Center or read while their parents attended parenting classes and learned about other community resources. (*Bell's Crossing Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools, 2008*).

## **11. After School Programs**

**The Club @ the Nest teen center.** This SIC partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of York County to create The Club @ the Nest, an on-site, after school teen center. Students received healthy snacks, homework assistance, and tutoring; had opportunities to participate in after school events; and participated in enrichment activities in the arts. (*Sullivan Middle SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2011*).

**Wright Care after school program.** The SIC at this middle school conducted a survey and found that a significant number of parents needed after school supervision for their pre-teens. The SIC formed teams that visited existing middle school programs in their district and subcommittees worked on the details of creating a program that would include homework

supervision and an opportunity to participate in clubs and enrichment activities in a safe, nurturing environment. The program, called Wright Care, was staffed by a full-time director and staff and utilized community volunteers from organizations such as Girl Scouts, Studio 2B, City Year, Chess Academy, and Junior Achievement. Teachers volunteered to stay late one afternoon a week to provide students with extra tutoring. (*E.L. Wright Middle SIC, Richland School District 2, 2007*).

## **12. Social and Emotional Learning**

**Social and Emotional Learning pilot project.** After analyzing its school's climate data for the prior two years, this SIC identified a consistent theme of behavioral issues that both staff and students described as interrupting learning. In response, the SIC and school collaborated to implement a Social and Emotional Learning pilot project. Several teachers participated in the pilot which involved measuring students' social and emotional skills using a strengths-based assessment that helped not only to identify areas of strength but also to pinpoint areas in need of further attention. The project provided teachers with strategies that they could use in the classroom and send home to families for individual skill building with students. (*Ebinport Elementary SIC, Rock Hill School District 3, 2016*).

## **Many thanks to the SICs whose work is featured in this Collection.**

*A.J. Lewis Greenview SIC, Richland School District 1*  
*Arden Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1*  
*Baron DeKalb Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District*  
*Bell's Crossing Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools*  
*Bookman Road Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2*  
*Brennen Elementary SIC, Richland School District 1*  
*Brushy Creek Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools*  
*Burgess Elementary SIC, Horry County Schools*  
*Camden Elementary School for the Creative Arts SIC, Kershaw County School District*  
*Chestnut Oaks Middle SIC, Sumter County School District*  
*The Children's School at Sylvia Circle SIC, Rock Hill School District 3*  
*Chukker Creek Elementary SIC, Aiken County Public School District*  
*Doby's Mill Elementary SIC, Kershaw County School District*  
*Dutch Fork High SIC, School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties*  
*E.L. Wright Middle SIC, Richland School District 2*  
*Ebinport Elementary SIC, Rock Hill School District 3*  
*Greenville High SIC, Greenville County Schools*  
*H.E. McCracken Middle SIC, Beaufort County Schools*  
*J.L. Mann High SIC, Greenville County Schools*  
*J. Paul Truluck Middle SIC, Florence School District 3*  
*Lake Carolina Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2*  
*Manchester Elementary SIC, Sumter County School District*  
*Marlboro High SIC, Marlboro County School District*  
*Martha Dendy 6th Grade/Bell Street Middle SIC, Laurens School District 56*  
*Morningside Middle SIC, Charleston County School District*  
*Myrtle Beach Cluster SIC, Horry County Schools*  
*North Augusta Elementary SIC, Aiken County Public School District*  
*North Augusta High SIC, Aiken County Public School District*

*Okatie Elementary SIC, Beaufort County Schools*  
*Pine Street Elementary SIC, Spartanburg School District 7*  
*Pineview Elementary SIC, Lexington School District 2*  
*Richland Northeast High SIC, Richland School District 2*  
*Ridge View High SIC, Richland School District 2*  
*Round Top Elementary SIC, Richland School District 2*  
*Saluda Trail Middle SIC, Rock Hill School District 3*  
*South Florence High SIC, Florence Public School District 1*  
*South Pointe High SIC, Rock Hill School District 3*  
*Stone Academy of Communication Arts SIC, Greenville County Schools*  
*Sullivan Middle SIC, Rock Hill School District 3*  
*Taylors Elementary SIC, Greenville County Schools*  
*Wade Hampton High SIC, Greenville County Schools*  
*West-Oak High SIC, Oconee County School District*