

Minutes
SIC Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting
Colonial Life Building, Columbia, SC
February 3, 2012

Board members present: Sylleste Davis, Chair; Virginia Alston Brown, Secretary; Carlos Primus, Immediate Past Chair; Gary Alexander; Ken Clark; Bruce Field; Bob Hanley; Bonnie King; Sandra Lindsay-Brown; Retha Ross; Ellen Still.

Staff members present: Cassie Barber, Executive Director; Tom Hudson, Associate Director; Claudia Wolverton, Public Information Director; Karen Utter, Council Specialist.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 AM by Sylleste Davis, Board Chair, who thanked all for their presence. A quorum was established and the agenda was approved.

The November 4, 2011, Board meeting minutes were approved.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Barber acknowledged contributions of Board members and noted illnesses that reduced attendance at the meeting. Among several items, she briefed the Board on her service on the Military Child Education Coalition's Public Engagement Steering Committee; provided updates on SC-SIC staffing due to sustained budget reductions, including the lay-off of Senior Council Specialist Diane Jumper, who may return when funding allows, and the retention of the services of Council Specialist Karen Utter following discussions with USC College of Education Dean Lemuel Watson.

Ms. Barber also provided updates on SC-SIC's upcoming Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration, March 24; SC-SIC's state funding appropriations; and the SC Education Policy Fellowship Program coordinated by SC-SIC; and that SC-SIC will present a workshop at the SCASA Innovative Ideas Institute, but not at this year's SCSBA conference.

Executive Director Barber thanked the Board for its support during her family's illness. She also acknowledged Associate Director Hudson for his administrative support and that of other office staff during that time.

A copy of the Executive Director's report is attached to these minutes.

Staff Reports

Associate's Director's Report

Associate Director Hudson updated the Board on SC-SIC trainings conducted and scheduled. He also apprised the Board of the status of Riley Award judging, and shared a draft agenda and plans for this year's Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration.

Mr. Hudson also briefed the Board on his recent testimony, with Board member Ellen Still, to the House Ways and Means K-12 Education Subcommittee, and shared materials provided to the subcommittee. He and Ms. Still agreed that the response was friendly, favorable and supportive.

In other information, Mr. Hudson acknowledged the resignation of Board member Lina Wehbi and discussed the replacement process.

A copy of the Associate Director's report is attached to these minutes.

Public Information Director's Report

Public Information Director Claudia Wolverton updated the Board on SC-SIC's efforts with its website, the *SC-SIC Member Network*, social media, and news releases.

A copy of the Public Information Director's report is attached to these minutes.

Council Specialist's Report

Council Specialist Karen Utter updated the Board on research, trainings, fund raising and her work in the office of the USC College of Education Dean's office. She outlined her visits to schools and stated that she assisted with the fundraising information that has been distributed to the Board. As a part of the Executive Director's recommendation to the College of Education's Dean, Ms. Utter's position was retained by working some hours for the Dean's office in the areas of research, writing, and project management assignments.

A copy of the Council Specialist's report is attached to these minutes.

Other Board Business

The Executive Director introduced guests, Amanda Wilson, Director of Development at the USC College of Education, and Robert Price, a community member from Kershaw County representing the grassroots effort, Citizens for Education Finance Reform.

Ms. Wilson offered information on how to approach potential donors, identifying multi-year and matching gift opportunities, and providing giving forms and materials to assist SC-SIC in soliciting charitable giving. She offered her support and that of her office to assist in fund raising endeavors.

Mr. Price thanked Mr. Hudson for inviting him to address the Board and outlined his statewide campaign to gather petition signatures to support funding for public schools in this state through his organization, Citizens for Education Finance Reform. With a target date to get signatures by July 2012, Mr. Price is soliciting support for equitable funding, a basic predictable funding for public education, and a change in the state's Act 388.

The Chair said that the Board will give his petition consideration and Board members offered suggestions and thanked Mr. Price on his efforts.

Board Meeting Discussion

The Awards/Conference Committee's report was presented by Committee Chair Bob Hanley. Former SC Governor Dick Riley has confirmed that he will be in attendance at the Annual Meeting and Award Celebration. All areas of the planning are moving along well. The registration cost will be \$25.00, which will cover lunch. The SC-SIC office will make a decision regarding the acceptance of late and on-site registrations. It was suggested by the Board that some manner of funding raising appeal be made at the Annual Meeting.

The Membership/Development Committee's report was presented by Committee Chair Ellen Still. She thanked the Board for their efforts in contributing personally and arranging for outside gifts. The Board Chair mentioned that donations to SC-SIC cannot be made as restricted gifts, however it was suggested that a "wish-list" be given to Ms. Wilson so that if in-kind donation are given to USC, SC-SIC can also benefit.

No Board action was taken concerning the reports, which were considered as information.

Before adjourning, the Board re-visited the presentation from Mr. Price. Mr. Hudson thanked Board members who offered information and insights to him in his efforts. While the Board took no action to endorse or support the petition effort, it was suggested that each Board member make a personal decision regarding their individual support or endorsement of the petition.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 1:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Alston Brown

Virginia Alston Brown, Ed D
Secretary, SC-SIC Board of Trustees

Cassie Barber, SC-SIC Executive Director**Key Actions:**

- Senior Council Specialist Diane Jumper was laid off at the end of December due to sustained budget reductions and the deletion of the proviso requiring SC-SIC to provide targeted assistance to At-Risk schools
- Met with Dean Lemuel Watson to discuss status of SC-SIC proviso in USC budget
- Dean Watson awarded a \$20,000 contract to SC-SIC in return for a variety of services. This contract enables SC-SIC to continue to employ Council Specialist Karen Utter for the remainder of this fiscal year
- Budget concerns prompted staff to meet with the SC-SIC Executive Committee concerning the upcoming SIC Annual Meeting and Celebration event. The decision was made to schedule the event for Saturday, March 24 instead of on a Friday due to the high cost of renting a facility
- Speakers have been secured for the March 24 event; Gov. Riley has been invited

Funding:

- SC Department of Education, Education Oversight Committee and the Governor's Executive Budget each include EIA funding for SC-SIC in the amount of \$127,303
- Tom Hudson and Ellen Still testified to the Ways and Means Public Education and Special Schools subcommittee on behalf of SC-SIC and requested an increase of \$35,000
- The Governor's Executive Budget requested the removal of the proviso directing the University of South Carolina to provide SC-SIC with \$100,000

Activities (selected):

- Convened two SC Education Policy Fellows sessions focused on major education policy in SC (featuring Ellen Still and Terry Peterson) and education funding in working with the legislature
- Attended All-College meeting featuring Dr. Mick Zais
- Attended informational session sponsored by Midlands Middle College featuring Dr. Zais
- Nominated to serve on Midlands Education Business Alliance Board of Directors; awaiting approval of Richland County Legislative Delegation
- Served on Military Child Education Coalition's Public Engagement Steering Committee
- Attended MCEC Public Engagement Event
- Attended Pee Dee Regional Business Leaders Summit on Early Childhood Education

- Accepted as presenter for SCASA's Innovative Ideas Institute (formerly Summer Leadership Institute)
- Not accepted to present at SC School Boards Association annual conference
- Working with COE faculty to provide services to targeted districts in Corridor of Shame at request of Dean Watson
- Accepted resignation of Board member, Lina Wehbi

REPORT TO THE BOARD

02/03/12

Tom F. Hudson, SC-SIC Associate Director

TRAININGS

Scheduled: Examining options for SIC Leadership & Advocacy trainings on either regional or county-by-county basis

Proposal accepted by SCASA (Summer Leadership Institute, June)

Completed: Workshop, “Activate, Educate, Advocate: Tapping Vox Populi,” joint SC/NC conference, National School Public Relations Association, 11/03/11, Pinehurst, NC (Hudson). 40-plus participants

OTHER ITEMS

Riley Award: 15 SIC Honor Roll recipients selected from Level One submissions. Level Two portfolios due in by Friday, 02/10/12. Level Two judging scheduled for Friday, 02/17/12 with announcement of finalists by Wednesday, 02/22/12.

2012 SC-SIC Annual Meeting: Secured location for meeting – Dreher High School – for Saturday, 03/24/12. Will be making arrangements for catering contract with Blue Marlin Signature Catering for breakfast/lunch items.

SC-SIC Funding: Testified before House Ways & Means Public Education subcommittee 01/18/12 with Board member Ellen Still.

SC-EPFP Participation: Co-presented session on S.C. Education Funding to SC-EPFP group 01/13/12 with Rep. Jerry Govan (D-Orangeburg) and Dr. Scott Mercer, Superintendent, Spartanburg 2.

Military Child Engagement: Invited to participate in S.C. “Living in the New Normal” Public Engagement, 02/01/12 and 02/02/12.

BOARD-SPECIFIC ITEMS

Board Membership: With resignation of Lina Wehbi, need to appoint new Board member. Possible candidate identified and will be discussed with Membership/Development Committee and Board Chair.

Claudia Wolverton, SC-SIC Public Information Director

SC-SIC Website

Our new sub-site (“sub-sites” appear as navigation buttons): *Policy News You Can Use* continues to provide access to key public documents pertaining to education-related legislation, budget items, and other materials impacting education in South Carolina. *S.C. Department of Education Provisos Submission for FY 2012-13; The Governor's Executive Budget for FY 2012-13; EIA Program Report for Fiscal Year 2011-12; Report on funding for SC-SIC via Education Improvement Act funding for fiscal year 2011-2012* have all been added to the site since 11/04/11.

Search rankings continue to rise in Google and other popular web browsers as schools add SIC pages to their websites. SC-SIC maintains social media pages (Facebook and Twitter) which also contribute to the rise in search rankings. A search on “SIC” now returns a second-place Google reference; one year ago search the term “SIC” returned no references to School Improvement Councils on the first or second Google page. Similar results are found using Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox.

SC-SIC Member Network

SIC Membership Reporting

As of 01/31/12, 1,003 of 1,129 (89%) of SICs were in compliance with state membership mandates. This represents a 1% drop from last year’s compliance record of 90%. Of the 1,129 SICs, 126 (or 11%) are not in compliance.

A comparison of this and last year’s figures takes into account numbers of schools that have closed, new schools that have opened and 4 “Career, Tech and Other” schools that have convened SICs that are in compliance. “Career, Tech and Other” schools that have not convened SICs or have convened SICs that are not in compliance are not counted as they are not mandated by state law to convene SICs. That brings the total number of SICs to 1,129, in contrast to last year’s number of 1,117 SICs.

Of 1,129 SICs, 1,039 have been completely updated and 129 have not been updated or have been partially updated. (The 129 figure includes SICs counted as “not in compliance” as they have not updated or completely updated their SIC Membership; 6 SICs have been partially updated.)

Report to the Parents Upload Feature

SC-SIC Member Network users have uploaded 407 *Reports* from the 2010-11 school year since the new feature was unveiled last March. As of 11/04/11, 259 *Reports* had been uploaded. The new tool is gaining traction as many schools and districts contact SC-SIC with questions about the upload process and appear eager to upload the 2010-11 *Reports*. We anticipate a large number of 2011-12 *Report* uploads. We are requesting that the *Reports* be uploaded by 06/01/12. *Reports* are due to the parents and community by 04/30/12 and are available for public viewing via the "View the SIC Members" (Read-Only) link on the *SC-SIC Member Network*. (<https://sic.ed.sc.edu/network/>)

The *Report* files uploaded by schools offer public, accessible information about what SICs across South Carolina are doing and accomplishing. We look for this data to be of multiple uses in the future.

Social Media

The SC-SIC Twitter account now has 805 followers (an increase of 17 from 11/04/11). Communication with education groups and professionals across the country provide accelerated access to P-20 news, blogs and journal articles as well as immediate contact with the community. Many of our Twitter followers are media personnel, political figures or key education players in South Carolina and often "retweet" or mention @SCSIC (our Twitter "handle") in their tweets, continuing to raise our public profile and advancing a key strategic planning goal. Among SCSIC are followers are several educators and organizations from other states and countries. Also of great use is the accessibility of breaking news obtainable through Twitter lists of media and SC politicians.

SC-SIC's Facebook Page "likes" have increased in number to 396, up from 380 on 11/04/11. Many links to information and articles that are shared on Twitter are also posted here, though less in number due to the real-time immediacy and faster pace of Twitter. Facebook, like Twitter, serves to increase our search engine rankings, again advancing our public profile.

Each quarter shows an increase in Facebook and Twitter followers. Social media usage among organizations and companies have taken an exponential leap as global events such as the current political climate and worldwide events have demonstrated the capacity to provide real-time contact and information sharing with the general public, clients and customers. It has become an essential tool in maintaining a public presence and rapid information flow; SC-SIC continues to be committed to pursuing this goal.

The latest news release, *15 local SICs named to S.C. School Improvement Council Honor Roll for 2012*, issued 01/17/12, has generated 65 views on Pitch Engine as of 01/31/12. Pitch Engine is another social media tool used to disseminate SC-SIC news releases. The prior release, *18 South Carolina professional and civic leaders named to prestigious education policy program*, issued on 09/20/11, generated 22 views.

Karen Utter, SC-SIC Council Specialist

I. Research

- A number of SICs have requested a free copy of “Engaging All Families,” by Steve Constantino, the first book reviewed on our new website feature “Good Reads for SICs.” We had acquired a number of copies of this book from the Department of Education’s former Youth Services Division and they are gradually disappearing from our shelves. Since the last meeting, we have posted a review of the book, “The Education of Teachers,” by John Merrow. The next book up is “Building Better Schools by Engaging Support Staff,” by Sam Bartlett & Vie Herlocker. Thanks to the former Youth Services Division, we will be able to offer free copies of this book to SICs as well.

II. Trainings

- “Basics” trainings: Delivered “Basics” training with Tom Hudson in Denmark, SC; met with new SIC at East Point Academy public charter school (Chinese Immersion) in Cayce, SC and engaged in informal discussion/training on establishing SICs in charter schools.

III. Funding

- Working from the recommendations of the SC-SIC Board of Trustees’ Committee on Membership/Development, developed the donor menu and fundraising plan that accompanied the model donor letter and talking points for the SC-SIC” Council Champions 2012” campaign.

IV. Office of the Dean, USC College of Education

- Worked on research, writing and project management assignments from Dean Lemuel Watson at the USC College of Education.