

SC-SIC Board of Trustees Meeting
August 10, 2007
Minutes

Present: Nell Stewart, Chair; Jeff Nicholson, Vice Chair; Nancy Hanley, Secretary; Virginia Alston Brown; Patrick Cobb; Sylleste Davis; Bruce Field; Tom Hudson; Carlos Primus; E' Lane Rutherford; Thessa Smith; Linda Weaver-Griggs; Cassie Barber, Executive Director; Diane Jumper, Senior Council Specialist.

Absent: Wilbur Cave; Ray Fleming; Gregory McCord; Cindy Smith; Judy Wilson.

Chairwoman Stewart called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m. at the S.C. Association of Counties. She welcomed Board members, who each gave personal introductions.

The May 11, 2007, minutes were approved with no corrections or additions.

Outgoing Chairwoman Ms. Stewart passed the gavel to Incoming Chairman Mr. Nicholson. He expressed his gratitude and explained how the SC-SIC will continue to move forward for public education in the state.

The agenda was altered to accommodate the schedule of Mr. Ronny Townsend, Director of Business and Community Partnerships with the S.C. Association of School Administrators (SCASA).

In discussion with the Board, Mr. Townsend referenced the following:

- He expressed his gratitude to Ms. Stewart, Ms. Barber and former Executive Director Dr. Jean Norman for their positive and meaningful involvement in politics regarding school improvement issues.
- He offered comment on a new SCASA initiative, "Legislators Back to School," to take place September 17 to October 19, 2007. This statewide effort will help showcase public schools for legislators and work to engage them in the various issues facing public schools today, such as state funding, school voucher/tax credit issues, school choice, and academic accountability on the state and national levels.
- Mr. Townsend explained that the General Assembly is seeing more legislators elected to office without knowing the history of public education in the state. Schools, and entities such as SC-SIC and SCASA, need to reach out and effectively inform legislators about the issues faced by schools, as less than 20% of 170 members are on record for visiting public schools.
- SCASA's "Legislators Back to School" program will provide a vehicle for educators to invite elected officials into local schools as a time for schools to put their "best foot forward" and not as a time for educators to debate with legislators on specific votes or issues. As special advocacy groups send regular and often negative and inaccurate information to legislators regularly information, the

SCASA initiative will provide a forum to present legislators with a first-hand and real world look at what is happening in and impacting on South Carolina's schools. With an election year approaching, elected officials need this inside view to take appropriate legislative action.

- Mr. Townsend shared three things that affect the SICs: the state's 85 school districts have as many as 10 superintendent vacancies over a year; approximately 10% of legislators change during elections; and the local SIC members change annually. Turnover such as this in different areas can affect a consistency of purpose and message making it even more important for shared and accurate information and collaborative relationships for positive change on education issues. He stated that SCASA can assist SC-SIC in further developing awareness regarding SICs, and to help all parties – school boards, superintendents, principals, and even SICs – that they are accountable to their communities.

Ms. Barber noted that the SC-SIC Board has worked to connect with SCASA for some time to partner on education-related initiatives, and that legislators and taxpayers should be routinely invited into schools. Together, the entities can share the strengths of public education in South Carolina and share important information with the public. SICs are a vital link in the process.

Board members, Mr. Townsend and Ms. Barber discussed various methods to encourage dialogue with legislators regarding funding issues, sharing positive messages about local schools, the impact of increasing out-of-state monies to influence school choice/private school tuition voucher legislation

Mr. Nicholson praised Ms. Stewart for her work as Chair and referenced her involvement with Greenville County SICs and at the state level. Ms. Stewart was presented with a plaque honoring her work. She will continue to serve on the SC-SIC executive committee in the role of Immediate Past Chair.

Former SC-SIC Board Member Mr. Tom Richardson was recognized in his absence with a plaque for his commitment to SICs and for his many years of service. Mr. Richardson will serve on the newly-formed SC-SIC Advisory Board. Ms. Davis will deliver the appreciation plaque to him.

In the Executive Director's Report, Ms. Barber highlighted the following items:

- In addition to Mr. Richardson assuming the post of Chair and Ms. Stewart that of Immediate Past Chair, Ms. Maria Taylor will serve as Vice Chair and Ms. Hanley will serve as Secretary. The position of Secretary is new to the Board and the bylaws will require updating to reflect the change. Board members were asked to review the list of contact information provided to them for changes and for members to determine what of their information should be posted to the SC-SIC website.
- She recapped her first six weeks as the new Executive Director of SC-SIC. She noted that in the last year, Dr. Norman had been absent frequently with health

issues and that Operations Manager Weldon Horne left SC-SIC and that his position was left unfilled. Ms. Barber noted that she and Public Information Coordinator Claudia Wolverton, who now also acts as webmaster, had handled the bulk of the SC-SIC's day-to-day operations.

- The new SC-SIC web site, www.sic.sc.gov, is now up and operational with a variety of new and previously existing resources available.
- A new SIC database will be announced at the District Contact meeting on September 14. This database has been designed to allow for individual school input of SIC membership data and will automatically determine SIC membership compliance with statute. The database will serve as both a resource for contact information and an accountability tool. Board members will be provided with passwords to access to the database so that they can better assist their local school districts.
- Information on the September 14 meeting will be provided to all Board members.
- The number of schools across the state rating as "unsatisfactory" on School Report Cards increased from 53 last year to 116 in 2007, primarily because of raised accountability standards. The SC-SIC is mandated by law to provide targeted assistance to unsatisfactory schools, and Ms. Jumper was recognized for her excellent work as Senior Council Specialist in working with this growing number of schools.
- The position of Program Services Director, a clinical instructor post on the USC faculty, is ready to be filled, and a new Council Specialist position will be filled before the end of the month.
- Ms. Barber noted that some work in revising the SC-SIC budget will be accomplished by Ms. Debra Williams, on staff with the USC College of Education. Ms. Williams will join the SC-SIC staff on a part-time basis. Board members will be presented with the revised budget at the next meeting. Additionally, Ms. Wolverton will have new handbooks ready in the near future.
- She recounted several meetings she has had recently with staff at USC and the S.C. Department of Education to foster a greater sense of collaboration and to help further educate the public on the roles and functions of SICs and the importance of advocacy and parental involvement.
- Her recent attendance at the SCASA Superintendent's Conference enabled her to establish and build upon contacts beneficial to SC-SIC and to strengthen the sense of partnership with SCASA and its members. One speaker at the conference, Dr. David Walsh of the Institute for Media and Family, was of particular interest. Author of the books *Why Do They Act That Way?* and *No: Why Kids – of All Ages – Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It*, Dr. Walsh spoke of brain development, the technological age and parenting. Ms. Barber stated that he would make an ideal speaker for the next SC-SIC conference (March 8, 2008) and that SCASA might be able to assist in booking him.
- School health and nutrition plans are now required by state law. SICs can make a strong statement on the issue with their schools and communities.
- The SC-SIC's new mission statement is being shared with all SICs. Additionally, school district public information officers have been asked to work with their SICs to promote the Riley Award this year.

- Eight regional training sessions have been proposed for the current school year across the state (Aiken, Anderson, Beaufort, Columbia, Florence, Georgetown, Greenville, and Rock Hill). The sessions will provide training on two levels: SIC Basics for new members and as a refresher, and Advocacy/Leadership for more experienced SIC members. Board members may be asked to assist at trainings to be conducted in their areas. Also, a comprehensive training plan including the regional offerings, district-level trainings and phone support, as well as a wish list for additional trainings, has been developed. SC-SIC staff will be trained this fall on scoring of this year's Riley Award applications.

In a review of goals for the 2007-08 year, Chairman Nicholson led the Board in discussion of primary focus areas of the SC-SIC's revised goals. Discussed were importance of district contacts; support of principals/district administrators; ongoing work and training related to leadership, advocacy and parent/community involvement; empowering districts to undertake their own approved SIC training; and targeting legislators for increased awareness.

In discussion of Board committee assignments, Mr. Nicholson and Ms. Barber asked Board members to review committee assignments and to advise the Executive Director if these assignments need adjustments. Discussed were the Advocacy, Awards/Conference and Membership/Development committees. It was noted that in regard to the latter two committees, bylaws changes are needed. Additionally, an ad hoc committee for SC-SIC branding was established consisting of Mr. Cobb, Dr. Field and Mr. Hudson. An ad hoc committee for student participation on the Board will be established, with Ms. Taylor and Ms. Davis serving. SC-SIC staff have student application and parental consent forms from the state Department of Education which may be models for student participation. More on this item will be discussed at the next Board meeting, scheduled for Friday, November 9, 2007.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:45 p.m.