

**SC – SIC Board of Trustees
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2009**

Board Members Present: Carlos Primus, Chair; E’Lane Rutherford, Vice Chair; Virginia Alston Brown, Secretary; Sylleste Davis; Michael Guarino; Georgia Lash; Retha Ross, Linda Weaver-Griggs, Bruce Field (by proxy).

Staff Members Present: Cassie Barber; Tom Hudson

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Carlos Primus at 10:00 AM.

New Board member Michael Guarino, an experienced School Improvement Council member from Mauldin, was welcomed.

The September 11, 2009, minutes were approved.

Executive Director Cassie Barber noted that this is her 10th anniversary with SC-SIC. The state’s financial climate has changed since she became Executive Director, negatively impacting the funding of the SC-SIC office. While charitable donations have not previously been part of the organization’s funding base, they are now being accepted and the office has established a fund with the USC Education Foundation. During conversations prior to this meeting, Board member Mark Bounds suggested to Ms. Barber that the Board look into the Palmetto Horizons Foundation and at the Board’s request, Mr. Trip DuBard of the Palmetto Horizons Foundation was invited to talk with the Board at this meeting and was introduced by Ms. Barber.

Mr. DuBard, a Florence native who has been instrumental in the school foundation for Florence School District One is a member of the State Board of Education and has spearheaded the reorganization of the Palmetto Horizons Foundation, which was founded to oversee the Teacher of Year funding. “Private dollars for public schools” is now the basis of the Foundation, in which there are currently five programs.

Like the USC Education Foundation, the Palmetto Horizons Foundation (PHF) holds funds for initiatives such as the Inside Out Centers for Learning and \$16 million for the Star Academies at the state’s Palmetto Priority Schools. The Foundation consolidates funds under one roof with investments in money market funds. There is an initial investment policy, which will be examined and expanded over time. The fees to participate in the Foundation include a \$500 set up fee and 3% annually; these charges keep the Foundation viable.

Mr. DuBard encouraged SC-SIC to think big. He suggested that asking every SIC member statewide to donate \$5 would generate \$80,000. \$5,000 would be the beginning investment and the Board is advised to accumulate at least \$10,000 before drawing from the donor fund. The initial investment becomes the Foundation’s money since it is the 501 (c) 3 holding the funds and donations earmarked for SC-SIC would be drawn down through written request subject to PHF board approval. Once \$10,000 is accumulated SC-SIC could treat its investment like an endowment and operate from the interest, or withdraw the funds in lump sums.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. DuBard gave the following contact information: (843) 601- 0435 or trip@palmettohorizons.org .

Following Mr. DuBard’s presentation, the Executive Director informed the Board that AstraZeneca in North Carolina is still considering making a donation of \$5000 in early 2010.

Chairman Primus asked the Board to come to consensus on proceeding with the Palmetto Horizons Foundation proposal. Ms. Davis made the motion to continue to research the Foundation, including seeking legal advice, and come back to the Board at a later date. The motion, seconded by Ms. Weaver-Griggs, was carried.

The following was included in the Executive Director's Report:

- Ms. Barber suggested that the Board develop a case statement that could be presented to potential donors, using the existing "Power of Many" piece as a template.
- She attended the recent Local Education Foundations Conference sponsored by PHF.
- Public Information Coordinator Claudia Wolverton will attend a social media conference in Greenville sponsored by the state library.
- A video featuring Round Top Elementary School, winner of the state Board of Education's annual Volunteer Award, has been posted to the SC-SIC website.
- Ms. Barber is chair of the Friends of Education and believes that she can make video clips/podcasts of State Superintendent of Education candidates regarding their thoughts about SICs and parent involvement to post on the SC-SIC website.
- The fall's District Contact meeting was a joint training for SIC District Contacts and SCDE's Parent Involvement Coordinators, with a majority of districts represented and was very well received.
- As an update from the Board's previous meeting, the Executive Director has put in application for two grants via the federal government in collaboration with USC's Education Policy Center and the Riley Institute at Furman University. If funded, the grants would provide more than SC-SIC's entire current budget. SCDE is submitting a proposal for the federal "Race to the Top" initiative and Ms. Barber is working to ensure that SC-SIC is included in the grant proposal.
- Chairman Primus testified before the EOC's EIA Subcommittee recently and made an appeal for SC-SIC funding for next year. The EOC subcommittee voted to "roll up" the funding up for SC-SIC along with a few other related programs to create a "parental and community involvement" competitive grants program. 50% of those funds would go to support SICs. Mr. Primus asked the EOC subcommittee to ensure that SC-SIC would receive funding in the amount of the current appropriation for this fiscal year. Ms. Barber has met with Deputy Superintendent Sandy Smith to request that language specify that 50% of the money would go directly to the state office and to request that SCDE contract with SC-SIC to facilitate the new grants process if it is approved.
- SC-SIC continues to collaborate with the Priority School initiative and the Title I state office, and Ms. Barber is serving as a member of the advisory committee for a cross divisional team at SCDE designed for family and community engagement. Additionally, SC-SIC will be paid \$2000 to work with four schools whose new principals need help with their SICs. Ms. Barber also presented at the New Principals' Induction session. These last two activities are a direct result of Board member Mark Bounds' support.
- Ms. Barber is also working with SCDE's Karen Williams and Dr. Sandra Lindsay of USC on a handbook for parental involvement modeled on programs from other states. She is also working on an advocacy handbook in conjunction with the Riley Institute at Furman University.
- Ms. Barber will be presenting at the upcoming Parent Leadership Conference February 12-14 at SC State University.
- In an effort to forge a stronger relationship with local school boards, the Executive Director and Board member Ken Clark met with Dr. Paul Krohne, Executive Director of the SC School Boards Association. Ms. Barber has applied to present at the next SCSBA conference.
- The Executive Director has a scholarship from the Riley Institute to attend the Diversity Leadership Initiative and graduate later in December. SC-SIC Director of Program Services Tom Hudson has been accepted into the next class and has received a partial scholarship.

In staff reports, Mr. Hudson presented an update on the SC-SIC Member Network for Ms. Wolverton, and reported increased local SIC membership compliance this year with 61 of 85 school districts in total compliance. There is now good data to share with legislators and SCDE regarding SIC membership.

Mr. Hudson also provided the Board with instructions on judging of this year's Riley Award applications. Model case statements have been included for judges and he encouraged judges to provide constructive criticism as feedback to applicants. Completed Level One score sheets from judges are due to the SC-SIC office by December 21.

The Advocacy Committee, chaired by Vice Chair E'Lane Rutherford, met with the full Board. Ms. Rutherford reported that Legislative Advocacy Day will be held February 23, 2010, at the Columbia Marriott. She shared the agenda which includes the new documentary, *State of Denial*. Ms. Rutherford discussed an initiative in Georgetown called Healthy Learners, funded by Sisters of Charity, and suggested they be invited to present, along with a teen pregnancy initiative.

Regarding funding recommendations for SC-SIC, Ms Rutherford encouraged Board members to visit the EOC website and contact their members in support of the office. There was discussion regarding H4197 sponsored by Rep. Bakari Sellars that would eliminate the EOC and the Business Education Partnership.

In other Advocacy Committee discussion, the Executive Director mentioned that that she worked on the original legislation that reduced the cost for background checks for mentors in schools from \$25 to \$8 dollars. Districts have applied for checks of other types of volunteers and SLED is now refusing to do those checks for \$8 due to their own budget needs, however this is being applied unevenly statewide. The concern is that children may not be safe and that legitimate volunteers may be discouraged from working in the schools.

The Awards/Conference Committee, chaired by Ms. Davis, also met with the full Board. The annual conference will be held March 13, 2010. Chairman Primus stated that Keenan High School in Columbia has offered its location at no charge for use of the building. The conference theme will be "The Power of Many." The following program suggestions were made: Keynote Speaker—Mark Bounds; Break-Out sessions—Frank White from SCDE; Dr. Leila Williams, Colleton County's superintendent; and Dr. Anthony Parker, superintendent from Berkeley County. It was suggested and agreed upon that: 1) last year's caterers provide the food; 2) The Riley Award Panel and the Advocate of the Year Award remain a part of the agenda; 3) former U.S. Secretary of Education Dick Riley will again be invited, and; 4) the fee for the conference be set at \$20 per person. Judging of Level Two Riley Award applications will be done at the February 12, 2010 Board meeting.

In final comments, the Executive Director mentioned that work needs to be done on the SC-SIC strategic plan. Two members have resigned from Board, Liz Michael and Sherri Smith. They will stay involved and Ms. Smith will remain with the Awards/Conference Committee. Potential members from Congressional District 3 were discussed. According to the Board's by-laws, the Chair can fill unexpired terms and Board members can make recommendations. Members asked that Mr. Gary Alexander, who is affiliated with SCANA and is past Chair of the SIC at Round Top Elementary School in Richland 2, be appointed to the Board to replace Ms. Michael. The Executive Director will explore a potential member from Congressional District 3.

Additionally, Ms. Barber stated that political candidates have asked for access to the SC-SIC database of members. Ms. Barber sought counsel from the SC Ethics Commission and was informed that it is permissible to release the membership information for that purpose and to charge a fee for the lists. Following consideration of this topic the Board voted not to provide distribution of the database for campaign purposes/solicitations and stipulations for its use will be placed on the website.

Motion to adjourn and the meeting adjourned at 3:33 PM.

Respectfully yours,

Dr. Virginia Alston Brown
Board Secretary