



S.C. School Improvement Council

“Civic Engagement in Public Education”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Morningside Middle School named 2009 SC-SIC Riley School Improvement Award winner

COLUMBIA – The School Improvement Council (SIC) of Morningside Middle School (Charleston County School District) has been named the recipient of the Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award for 2009.

The award was presented Saturday afternoon at the S.C. School Improvement Council’s Awards Luncheon in Columbia.

The annual Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award was created in 2002 to recognize the significant contributions made to public education by the more than 15,000 School Improvement Council (SIC) members who volunteer in every public school in the state.

An urban Title I school in North Charleston, Morningside Middle cited among its SIC’s accomplishments in 2007-08 a greater focus on student achievement; a student reading competition; several student leadership programs; a student/teacher relationship building program called “Bridges;” an expanded community carnival raising awareness on assessment testing success; and a variety of programs to support the faculty. With the leadership of the school’s principal and its committed SIC members, this council has gone from virtually non-existent to exemplary in three years – mobilizing the entire school community to focus on improvement.

“This is a well-deserved honor for the SIC of Morningside Middle School,” said SC-SIC Board of Trustees Chair Jeff Nicholson. “To see school administrators, parents, teachers, and community members working together as they have for the betterment of the school and its students is truly a testimony to what effective School Improvement Councils are all about.”

The Riley Award is named in honor of former South Carolina Governor and U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley and his late wife, Tunky, and recognizes the couple’s longstanding commitment to quality public education.

Presented with Honorable Mentions for the work of their SICs last school year were: The Children’s School at Sylvia Circle (Rock Hill School District Three); Hunt Meadows Elementary School (Anderson School District One); Mauldin High School (Greenville County Schools); and Round Top Elementary School (Richland School District Two). A brief description of the work of each of these SICs during the last year is included with this release.

Located at the University of South Carolina’s College of Education, the SC-SIC was established in state law over three decades ago to provide the member training, technical assistance, statutory accountability, and operational resources vital to the continued success of the community-based School Improvement Councils in each of the state’s 1,100-plus K-12 public schools.

S.C School Improvement Council Board of Trustees Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award

2009 Winner

**Morningside Middle School, Charleston County School District, North Charleston
Sherrel Brown, SIC Chair; Kala T. Goodwine, Principal**

Morningside Middle School is an urban Title 1 school whose students face many challenges that come with poverty. The SIC credits their principal with building a strong foundation upon which they have to launched much-needed actions to foster improved student achievement. Some SIC sponsored activities include: a community PACT carnival; a student reading competition; student leadership programs; a student/teacher relationship building program called Bridges; and a variety of programs to support the faculty. This council has gone from virtually non-existent to exemplary in three years – and they mobilized the entire school community to focus on school improvement.

2009 Honorable Mentions

**The Children's School at Sylvia Circle, Rock Hill School District 3, Rock Hill
Rod Benfield, SIC Chair; Sandra Lindsay-Brown, Principal**

This Montessori school's SIC focused on closing the achievement gap for their very diverse student population. The SIC focused their attention on ensuring that the various subgroups met Adequate Yearly Progress – especially in Science. The Council's efforts included recruiting a professor and honor students from nearby Winthrop University to provide tutoring; organizing a science fair; and putting together a school trip to the Space Camp in Huntsville, AL – with scholarships for needy students. The results of their efforts were reflected in improved absolute and improvement ratings on their school report card.

**Hunt Meadows Elementary School, Anderson School District One, Easley
Alison Pearson, SIC Chair; Nancy Prince, Principal**

This small rural school took on some big challenges when they created committees to focus on Strong Families, Beautification and Data Collection/Grants. SIC members developed programs to help families gain information and assistance regarding both physical and mental health challenges; they initiated a Garden Club, cleared the nature trail and identified the trees for the science teachers; and they developed a system of data collection that has increased the schools ability to successfully apply for grants and awards.

**Mauldin High School, Greenville County School District, Mauldin
Michael Guarino, SIC Chair; Ann Miller, Principal**

The SIC from this large, suburban high school focused on creating a sense of community in a sprawling area with numerous feeder schools and a positive identity for their school following considerable negative publicity from an incident perpetrated by a handful of students. They developed strategies, engaged community partners and secured monetary resources to launch a comprehensive public relations campaign. Their outreach has resulted in a newfound community respect for the school, greater participation of the community in the school, and increased student engagement in community activities.

**Round Top Elementary School, Richland School District Two, Blythewood
Gary S. Alexander, SIC Chair; Jeaneen M. Tucker, Principal**

Round Top is located in a rapidly growing suburban area that includes many residents new to South Carolina. The SIC developed a variety of strategies with this diverse population in mind. Activities focused on divisive traffic issues; a formal process that creates a commitment to academics among administrators, teachers, parents and students; a program to bolster ELA scores; and a survey to elicit feedback on teaching, testing and communication. The SIC's evaluation of these activities shows enhanced community support, improved traffic safety, a 41% increase in book circulation, and a tangible method of providing feedback to teachers to enhance effectiveness.