



# SC School Improvement Council

*“Civic Engagement in Public Education”*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Richland Northeast High SIC named winner of 2013 SC-SIC Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence**

COLUMBIA – The School Improvement Council (SIC) of Richland Northeast High School in Columbia (Richland School District 2) has been named the recipient of the 2013 Dick and Tunky Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence.

The award was presented Saturday afternoon during the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) Annual Meeting at St. Andrews Middle School in Columbia.

The annual Riley Award for SIC Excellence was created in 2002 to recognize the significant contributions made to public education by the nearly 15,000 School Improvement Council members who volunteer in every public school in the state. The award is named in honor of the former SC Governor and US Education Secretary and his late wife, and recognizes the couple’s longstanding commitment to quality public education.

“The School Improvement Council of Richland Northeast High has done some significant and unique work that is well-deserving of this award,” said SC-SIC Board of Trustees Chair Ellen M. Still. “This SIC truly embodies what Councils are all about – bringing parents, educators, community members, and students together to share ideas, identify needs and take collaborative steps making a positive impact on the lives and futures of their schools.”

The Richland Northeast High SIC serves a school in an economically re-emerging area with an international flavor. In the last year, the SIC partnered with local elected and other officials, as well as school board members and district administrators, to maintain a well-balanced student population during a school rezoning process. It also worked extensively with school and district staff to promote the school’s International Baccalaureate (IB) program throughout the community and on continuing efforts to revitalize and enhance the physical appearance and facilities at the school. Additionally, the SIC worked with a marketing firm to re-brand the school and improve public perception, and undertook a variety of strategies to increase effective internal and external communications, resulting in positive feedback.

This School Improvement Council is the first two-time recipient of the SC-SIC Riley Award for SIC Excellence, having previously received the recognition in 2003.

Presented with Honorable Mentions for their work last school year were: Beck Academy Middle SIC, Greenville (Greenville County Schools); Brushy Creek Elementary SIC, Columbia (Greenville County Schools); Eagle Nest Elementary SIC, North Charleston (Dorchester School District 2); and North Augusta High SIC, North Augusta (Aiken County Public School District). A brief description of the work of each of these SICs follows the text of this release.

Located in the University of South Carolina’s College of Education, the SC-SIC was established in state law 35 years 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.



## SC School Improvement Council Board of Trustees *Dick and Tunky Riley Award for SIC Excellence*

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### **2013 Riley Award Finalists**

#### **2013 Winner - Richland Northeast High SIC, Columbia (Richland School District 2)**

Serving a school in an economically re-emerging area with an international flavor, this SIC partnered with local elected and other officials, as well as school board members and district administrators, to maintain a well-balanced student population during a school rezoning process. The SIC also worked extensively with school and district staff to promote the school's International Baccalaureate program throughout the community and on continuing efforts to revitalize and enhance the physical appearance and facilities at the school. Additionally, it worked with a marketing firm to re-brand the school and improve public perception, and undertook a variety of strategies to increase effective internal and external communications, resulting in positive feedback.

#### **Honorable Mention - Beck Academy Middle SIC, Greenville (Greenville County Schools)**

In response to massive budget cuts felt by schools districts across the state, this SIC became focused on the economy's effect on class size and educational opportunities at its school. Concerned about legislative efforts to shift limited funding away from traditional public schools, the SIC partnered with other SICs in the district to host a town hall style meeting with two local state House members to discuss education funding issues, and facilitated a Republican Senate primary race debate. These activities helped lead to a greater awareness among community members and elected officials of the real impact of school funding issues and have fostered increased partnerships with SICs in the district.

#### **Honorable Mention - Brushy Creek Elementary SIC, Taylors (Greenville County Schools)**

This SIC, serving a school with rapidly increasing enrollment, recognized safety challenges with student dismissal and undertook a number of efforts to improve procedures for the afternoon car line, student pick-up and pedestrians. Working with the PTA, school administrators and the nearby community, the SIC took steps to modify drop-off and pick-up procedures, install fences around the driveway, bushes at the school perimeter and erect signage to increase pedestrian safety and prevent improper parking. The SIC also collaborated with SC Safe Routes to School to improve walking routes and utilize crossing guards, and partnered with surrounding businesses and a neighboring church to alleviate unauthorized off-campus student pick-up.

#### **Honorable Mention - Eagle Nest Elementary SIC, North Charleston (Dorchester School District 2)**

The school served by this SIC is in a suburban community with a low socio-economic, transient and multi-cultural population of families which find it difficult to provide their children with materials and resources necessary for academic success. With the school's Title I team and guidance counselors, the SIC issued a parent survey to assess the needs and interests of its families. This demonstrated a desire for ideas to help with homework and learning strategies to increase reading skills. The SIC instituted a Reading Prize Patrol, which awarded students who were found to be reading when the Prize Patrol visited their homes, with bags of books for their household. To date, over 80 student homes have received books from the Reading Prize Patrol.

#### **Honorable Mention - North Augusta High SIC, North Augusta (Aiken County Public School District)**

This SIC undertook a number of efforts to assist in the improvement of student academic performance, increase traffic safety, identify facility needs, and communication with elected officials. It took a vital role in creating a Freshman Academy to help incoming ninth graders adjust to high school and instituted a quarterly student recognition lunch to reward students working to overcome academic, behavior and attendance issues. The SIC worked with various officials to identify future design improvements for traffic flow and organized tours to showcase and explain facility needs. It also met with its local state Representative to discuss funding issues and established plans to meet annually with other elected officials on facility, instructional and budgetary challenges.