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"Civic Engagement in Public Education"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State EOC Executive Director Melanie Barton Named SIC Advocate of the Year for 2015

COLUMBIA – Ms. Melanie D. Barton, Executive Director of the SC Education Oversight Committee, has been named by the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) Board of Trustees as SIC Advocate of the Year for 2015.

The award was announced Saturday, March 7, during the SC-SIC Annual Meeting in Lexington.

The SIC Advocate of the Year Award recognizes exemplary efforts on behalf of School Improvement Councils and is presented annually by the SC-SIC Board of Trustees to individuals who go above and beyond in supporting and promoting SICs in their particular spheres of influence.

“We salute Ms. Barton’s work and ongoing support of public education in South Carolina, and the vital roles of the SC School Improvement Council and local SICs in parental and community engagement within their communities,” said SC-SIC Executive Director Tom F. Hudson. “Additionally, in her capacity with the EOC, Ms. Barton took a prominent role in the 2013 creation of the Center for Educational Partnerships within the University of South Carolina’s College of Education. We recognize and appreciate Ms. Barton’s energies and commitment to the success of this effort.”

The Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP) is composed of five existing USC programs funded through the state’s Education Improvement Act, and has fostered a cohesive environment for the programs to work more collaboratively, proactively, and accountably in serving schools, educators, students, parents, and communities across the state. Programs which are part of the CEP include the SC School Improvement Council, SC Geographic Alliance, SC Writing Improvement Network, SC Middle Grades Initiative, and the SC Educational Policy Center.

Ms. Barton joined the Education Oversight Committee in 2001 as staff for the EOC’s Parent Involvement Subcommittee and as an advisor to the committee on spending recommendations for Education Improvement Act funds. Additionally, she assisted in the design of the EOC’s state education funding model and served on the evaluation team for the state’s full-day 4K program.

A 1984 graduate of Furman University with a Master’s degree in Public Policy from Duke University, Ms. Barton previously served as a research analyst with the state’s Senate Education Committee and the Office of Senate Research.

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Within the community, Ms. Barton has served as a local School Improvement Council member. She and her husband live in Northeast Columbia, and they have a son and daughter-in-law residing in Greenville, and a daughter currently attending Furman University.

Previous recipients of the SIC Advocate of the Year Award have included state legislators, school and district level staff, and principal-SIC Chair teams.

A core partner of the Center for Educational Partnerships at the University of South Carolina College of Education, SC-SIC was established in state law over 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.

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