



# **The Dick and Tunky Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence**

## **2019 Application**

### **Level One**

#### **Hilton Head Island Middle School**

55 Wilborn Rd.

Hilton Head Island, SC 29926

**Beaufort County School District**

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## Hilton Head Island Middle School SIC Case Statement

The main initiative of the HHIMS SIC, identified in the 2016/17 school year, continues to be the Stingray Support Circle. The Stingray Support Circle (SSC) was initially conceived as a school based pantry of uniforms, toiletries, school supplies, household items and food items that are distributed to students and families in need. Our school's mantra is "One Vision, One Voice, One Stingray Family." **To support that mantra, while supporting the struggles that a great deal of our students are faced with day in and day out, is our stated goal.** After all, isn't that what family is all about? Over 49.7% of HHIMS' students live at or below poverty level, with a large percentage of students who speak English as a second language. With two Title One elementary schools feeding into HHIMS, our school sees firsthand the needs of our families. Out of this disparity between the haves and the have-nots, the glaring disparity in test scores and grades, the time that was being missed from class due to lack of resources and the inability of some students to be able to participate in school extracurricular activities, The SSC was born.

Located in an inauspicious closet in the HHIMS gymnasium, students (escorted by their guidance counselor or social worker,) are able to "shop" in the SSC, getting the items they need to be a fully-functioning, engaged student. In a planning SIC meeting, we discussed how we could all remember what our middle school years were like and then imagined not having access to clean clothes, school supplies and toiletries, making the experience that much more difficult. The SSC has been a saving grace for our Stingray families and our teachers, providing assistance beyond the classroom. There is no judgment, no expectation of return. The SIC is designed to provide help to those who need it and we chose the symbol of a circle as it encompasses all that are within our family!

Since we started the SSC in 2016/17, we quickly began to realize that it was a powerful tool for our school and what an amazing, dedicated and connected SIC we had at HHIMS. In addition with all of the SIC's efforts, we now had the direct support of our amazing community. **Our 2017/18 initiative was how we could work to enhance our SSC and "the network" that has developed to further support our students and staff.** We collaborated and focused on **building our Facebook and E-mail network; increasing community member and local business support; communicating with HHIMS families on how they could get involved; supporting teachers and staff directly; increasing the needed items provided to students; and re-applying for *The Dick and Tunky Riley SIC Award of Excellence*.** We formed informal committees that were responsible for each area and we rolled up our sleeves and hit the community pavement. What we found is that we were met with open arms and a great deal of support.

### Building our Facebook and E-mail Network

The Facebook page and the SSC e-mail network were established in the 2016/17 school year, but through the hard work of our SIC in the 2017/18 school year, **we went from a little over 100 to over 350 followers on Facebook and our e-mail support circle has grown to approximately 200 supporters.** As an SIC, we promoted Facebook invite initiatives and SIC members' gathering of e-mail addresses of friends and community members. Any time we have a need or an opportunity for volunteering, we distribute that information to this network. The increased number of members had a profound impact by **increasing the number of registered long-term volunteers within our HHIMS walls by 169 (a 332% increase from the previous year)!** This increased support also has ensured that to date, **we have been able to meet 97% of all needs that have been presented to the SSC,** including but not limited to, requests for bicycles for transportation; furniture; clothing; and sporting equipment needed to participate in school sports.

### Increasing community member and local business support

Increasing community member/local business involvement has had a domino effect at HHIMS. By placing strategically chosen community board members on our SIC, we have connected with churches and community organizations throughout our local area. In the 2017/18 school year, we met offsite during four (4) of our meetings. This helped to bring increased awareness to the academic struggles of our African American student population in reading and test scores; the many needs within our building for some TLC; the specific needs within our SSC; the needs of our ESOL students; and finally, the need for community members to connect via mentoring programs on campus. These two (2) strategies led to a relationship with Impact Mentoring that began extending their reach from elementary students to HHIMS students and an additional mentoring program that was started at HHIMS for African American young men where at least 10 mentors began coming into the building to work with these students on a weekly basis. The SSC's relationships with local churches led to a cluster wide collection of back to school items for all four (4) Hilton Head Island schools; a teacher cookie delivery; a donated teacher appreciation breakfast; and an on campus clean up service day that brought over 75+ volunteers (most of whom had never stepped foot in our schools before.)

### Communicating with HHIMS families/community ways to get involved

The StingRAYSing awareness newsletter and other community outreach efforts proved to be very effective in the 2017/18 school year. Over nine (9) SIC StingRAYSing awareness newsletters were electronically sent to all of the families at HHIMS, The SSC was featured in a full page spread in our local Pink Magazine and our SIC chair was on a local news segment on WHHI promoting SIC's and their roles in local schools while also promoting The SSC at HHIMS. These three (3) strategies increased the awareness of our programs and we were directly contacted by other schools, businesses, local organizations, parents and even by parties in other areas to ask about the SSC and its impact.

### Supporting teachers and staff directly

Another enhancement to The SSC during the 2017/18 school year was the additional support to teachers and staff through events hosted and partnerships established. Our SIC hosted a teacher coffee in the SSC store improving internal awareness of the SSC network and how it could help the teachers and a wish list where they were able to sign up for items needed in their class rooms, which we were able to meet 100% of those requests. HHIMS also hosted an event called the AIM walk that promotes healthy living, as well as a career day and the SIC and SSC networks were able to secure at least 70% of the volunteers and businesses that participated in these two programs.

### Increasing needed items provided to students

Due to the success and desire to enhance the SSC throughout the school and local community we were able to increase donations and support to our HHIMS students and teachers in the following ways: the Circle's store is now opened and staffed by SIC members is now operating four (4) days a week from 8:30-10:30am. Our SIC board through successful fundraising, contacting local organizations and applying for grants has raised over \$3500 in monetary donations and \$3000 in gift cards and in-kind donations (All monies that are collected are handled and maintained through the HHIMS PTA. The HHIMS SIC holds zero funds and only manages the operations.) The SSC Store has more than doubled the amount of students served in The SSC through the 2017/18 school year to over 510 visits. Due to awareness, we received over 500 gently used uniform items, more than double the donations from last year. Through these amazing donations, we were able to increase our Christmas bag distribution program from 40 students to 75 students. We enhanced the Christmas store by extending an invitation to many parents who could come and pick out gently used items that were donated by our community. In the 2017/18 school year we added an 8th Grade Promotion Ceremony clothing drive and collected over 50 dresses, 15+ ties,

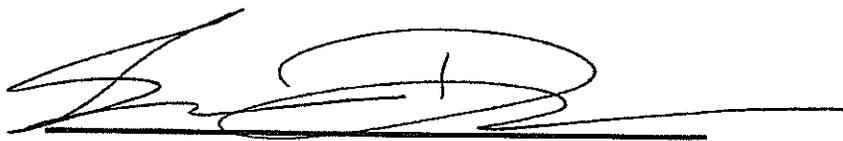
20+ dress shirts, so that all students had the opportunity to have something nice to wear to their promotion. We purchased and distributed over 75 Stingray Hoodies allowing students to have the same spirit gear purchased by their peers. Due to our ongoing and enhanced relationships with one of our local food banks, we distributed over 1080 snack bags to students to take home over the weekends.

#### Re-applying for the Dick and Tunky Riley SIC Award of Excellence

The HHIMS SIC agreed that after being named as one of the 11 SC schools on the honor roll for *The Dick and Tunky SIC Award of Excellence*, last year, that it should be another goal of ours to re-apply. The feedback we received from this experience was invaluable and the exposure once again brought more awareness to the needs within our school. The feedback allowed us to go back and **revise our school bylaws** to ensure that in the 2018/19 school year we are meeting the sitting board member requirements properly. **We properly documented in all of our minutes** the fact that although the SIC operates and manages the entire SSC all of the financials are managed through the HHIMS PTA. The most significant impact though was the recognition statewide and was actually responsible for our **appearance on our local news station**.

HHIMS has gone through a great deal of transition over the past five (5) plus years and once again at the end of the 2017-2018 school year, we were left without a principal and are still struggling to keep a consistent social worker. The SSC and HHIMS SIC could not be successful if we did not have the constant, heartfelt support of the community and volunteers that make up our Stingray Support Network. The SSC has created a gateway to opening conversations about the needs for volunteers, mentors, substitute teachers and community involvement at HHIMS. The SIC board views the SSC as the heart of the building! Through all of the many recent transitions, The SSC has been **a constant in the life of our school** over the past three (3) years. **Volunteer registration has increased last year by over 332% . Referrals for minor infractions** for students not being prepared have **decreased by 12% . Over 500+ students' needs were met . Teachers received support for their classrooms in the form of supplies . Mentors and volunteers** and many around the **community are more aware** of the needs and the great things that are happening at HHIMS. We also measure our success by seeing the **happy and successful children** in our halls that are now **focused on their education and future success!** The SSC is forever changing, just as life is. The SSC will continue to evolve and grow to meet the needs of our entire school community in order to ensure the future success of the students at HHIMS.

The HHIMS SIC is very proud of its accomplishments and we are looking ahead to the next steps with our wonderful new leadership. We continue to be incredibly thankful for the support that we receive to help those who need it most. Thank you for your consideration of the HHIMS SIC for *The Dick and Tunky Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence*. It would truly be an honor and bring even more awareness to what can be done when we all come together.



Shannon Bedenbaugh- HHIMS SIC Chair 2017/2018