



“The Basics” For Effective SICs

What Is An SIC?

A School Improvement Council (SIC) is:

- **broad-based**
 - parents – teachers – community members
 - students – administrators – school leaders
- **advisory only**
- **focused on school improvement**
- **required at every K-12 public school by law**

SICs in South Carolina

SICs were established in state law 40 years ago. Ensuing legislation through the years has strengthened SIC roles and responsibilities.

- 1977 – Education Finance Act (EFA)
- 1984 – Education Improvement Act (EIA)
- 1993 – Early Childhood Act (Act 135)
- 1998 – Education Accountability Act (EAA)
- 2014 – Read to Succeed Act

What SICs Do

Provide input and feedback on strategic improvement plans and updates

By law, every school must create five-year Plan and update annually
Includes reading plans required by “Read to Succeed” Act

Assist school in implementing improvement activities

Activities may be from Plan or developed by SIC

Monitor and report on progress toward improvement goals

Annual *SIC Report to the Parents*
Narrative in the school's yearly *SC Report Card*

Types of SIC Members

Elected

- Parents
- Teachers
- Students (Grades 9-12)
 - Serve staggered two-year terms

Appointed

- Community Members
 - SIC determines length of term in bylaws

Ex-Officio:

- Principal
 - Others by virtue of their position, knowledge, or experience such as PTA/PTO chair, Teacher of the Year, Parent Liaison, Past SIC Chair

SIC Elections

By law, SIC elections must be held **annually** and completed by **October 15**

Use any method that is fair and aimed at getting high levels of participation

Spring elections should include incoming students/families of feeder schools

Types of SIC Elections

Parents Elect Parents	Piggyback on school events that bring large numbers of parents to school
Teachers Elect Teachers	Nominations and elections usually held during an all teacher meeting
Students Elect Students	Can hold at same time as student government elections if the timing is right; SIC positions should be a separate line on ballots

See SIC Elections Toolkit for more info @ sic.sc.gov

SIC Appointments













SIC community members are appointed by the principal

Should be individuals who aren't parents or employed by the district or school who can:

- Bring resources
- Lend expertise
- Build community support
- Think beyond the usual suspects

See SIC Handbook for suggestions @ sic.sc.gov

Minimum SIC Size

Elementary and Middle Schools					
Elected		Appointed		Ex-Officio	
					
Parents		Teachers		Community Members	Principal
High Schools (Grade 9 and above)					
Elected			Appointed		Ex-Officio
					
Parents		Teachers		Students	Principal

How Big is Too Big?

Law doesn't limit the number of SIC members
But bigger isn't always better.

Your SIC should reflect the size and diversity of the school, but not be so big that it becomes unwieldy or unmanageable.

Not everyone has to be a "member" of the SIC. Anyone interested can attend meetings, serve on committees, or help with SIC initiatives.

Reporting Membership to SC-SIC

Principal creates Member Network Account for school

Principal updates Member Network password every year after July 1

SIC Chair collects and delivers all member contact information to Principal

Principal posts information to Member Network by deadline: **November 15**

SIC Member Network direct link: <https://sic.ed.sc.edu/network>

Getting Started

Elect SIC Officers	Make Meeting Schedule	Distribute Key Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair/Co-Chairs • Vice Chair • Secretary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 8 meetings per year • Consider needs of all members when selecting days and times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SIC Handbook</i> • Current SIC Bylaws • School Improvement Plan

“If you had to identify – in one word – the reason why the human race has not achieved its full potential, that word would be ‘meetings’.”

Dave Barry, Author & Humorist



What Does an Effective SIC Meeting Look Like?

Hint: The answer isn't "listening quietly to reports for an hour..."

- Correction/approval of prior meeting's minutes
- Report/Update from the principal
- Committee Reports/Work Sessions/Guest Speakers
- Next Steps
- Discussions are focused but lively
- All SIC members are actively engaged



Best Practices for SIC Meetings

The Chair:

- identifies meeting goals in advance
- develops agenda with input from the principal
- sends reminders in advance of meetings
- runs meetings and coordinates discussions
- starts and ends meetings on time

The Vice Chair:

- assists Chair and acts in absence of the Chair

The Secretary:

- takes minutes and distributes draft for member review prior to next meeting



Best Practices for SIC Meetings

The Principal:

- answers questions and provides information
- helps make meetings a safe place for all members to speak freely
- shows support and appreciation for SIC's work

All Members:

- pre-review agenda, minutes, and other materials
- complete assigned tasks
- help Chair to keep discussions on point, follow the agenda, and encourage others to participate



SICs & the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

SICs are considered “public bodies” as defined by South Carolina law (Title 30, Chapter 4)

Meetings are open

Post notices of Meeting Schedules & Agendas

Records are open: Bylaws, Minutes, Membership

Keep SIC records on file



Developing SIC Bylaws

- Bylaws are your SIC's rules of thumb
- Keep your bylaws handy and up-to-date
- Bylaws should cover the following:


Purpose – Membership – Election/Appointment
Tenure – Officers/Duties – Meetings – Voting
Training – Amendments

See SIC Bylaws Toolkit for more info @ sic.sc.gov

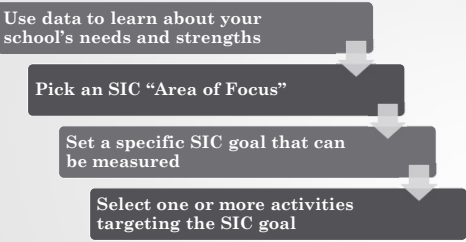


“What lies in our power to do
lies in our power not to do.”


Aristotle, Greek Teacher & Philosopher



Steps to Effective SIC Action



1. Use data to learn about your school's needs and strengths
2. Pick an SIC "Area of Focus"
3. Set a specific SIC goal that can be measured
4. Select one or more activities targeting the SIC goal



SICs Often Adopt Goals and Activities From the School Improvement Plan

Improvement Plan describes school needs and strengths in three areas


- Academic achievement
- Teacher/administrator quality
- School climate

Identifies areas of focus and goals


- SIC can select an area of focus and goal from the Plan

Provides an action plan for achieving goals

- SIC can help with implementing activities listed in Action Plan
- SIC can develop additional activities that complement ones in the Action Plan



School Climate						
Area of Focus: Family Engagement						
Goal: Increase parent satisfaction with home school relationship by 2% per year as measured by parent survey.						
Strategy: Build positive relationships between parents, teachers, and students.						
Activities	Timeline	Persons Responsible	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Monitor:	Status
Administer parent, teacher, and student surveys and analyze results to monitor effectiveness of our organization.	2015-2020	Administration, Teachers, SIC	Included in current salaries and duties	General Fund, and other payroll funding	Analyze School Report Card	Continuing
Host a Family Night to solicit parent involvement in building home school relations for the academic and social development of students.	2015-20	Administration, Teachers, SIC	Included in current salaries and duties	General Fund and other payroll funding sources.	Agenda notes from planning meeting	Continuing
Utilize the local media to advertise school sponsored events to increase parental awareness and participation.	2015-20	Administration, Public Information Officer, SIC	Included in current salaries and duties.	General Fund, and other payroll funding sources.	Flyers, Calendar of Events	Continuing



The Plan Doesn't Always Address All Issues of Concern

SICs can select "Area of Focus" not addressed in the plan


- Traffic and pedestrian safety in the school's pick-up and drop-off area

Gather data to identify and understand the issues

- survey of parents who use the pick-up and drop-off area
- meeting with the principal, teachers, and staff who work the car lines
- meetings with highway department officials, law enforcement, and district staff

Develop SIC goals and activities

- Goal: Add an additional lane going out of the parking lot to relieve congestion
- Goal: Add pathway for student walkers
- Activities
 - Communicate regularly with parents to educate and build support for SIC goals
 - Develop evidence and prepare a request for improvements
 - Meet with school board members and district staff until the proposal is approved



Use Committees to Help Organize SIC Work

Committees formed around SIC areas of focus or goals

Committees do research, tend to details and logistics, and prepare recommendations to submit to the full SIC

Committees report on their work regularly to the full SIC

Committee members don't have to be SIC members

SICs can also form standing committees for ongoing work in areas such as member recruitment, publicity or advocacy



Reporting on SIC Work

- SIC issues (by April 30) the *SIC Report to the Parents* outlining progress for the current school year
Needs – Goals – Actions – Results
Examples available on SC-SIC website
- With the principal, the SIC writes the annual narrative for the *SC School Report Card*
Briefly describes the school & notes goals, successes & challenges for the year reported
- Tell the story stats alone don't tell about your school



Inclusive Leadership

If all voices are not heard, the whole story is not told.

Are parents, students, teachers & community members truly engaged in our schools?

~ OR ~

Is community engagement just another requirement to check off the list?



Dick & Tunky Riley Award for SIC Excellence

Presented annually by SC-SIC to recognize outstanding & effective efforts of a local SIC

Submit application, Case Statement & supporting materials

Three-level judging process

Single winner & four Honorable Mentions

Other SICs can receive Honor Roll status



2018 Riley Award Honorees

Winner – Walhalla High SIC
(School District of Oconee County)

Chapin Intermediate SIC
(School District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties)

Hilton Head Island High SIC
(Beaufort County School District)

Saluda High SIC
(Saluda County Schools)

South Florence High SIC
(Florence 1 Schools)



SC-SIC Vision and Mission

Vision

“To promote and support civic engagement for quality public education in South Carolina.”

Mission

“SC-SIC facilitates meaningful parental and community involvement in our state’s public schools by providing resources, tools, and strategies to local School Improvement Councils and other stakeholders groups.”



Services Provided by SC-SIC

- Website (sic.sc.gov) with free downloadable materials, resources, and information
- Electronic newsletter (*Council News*) for SIC members
- Periodic email updates (*In the Loop*) touching on SIC related topics, educational issues, and legislation
- Social Media – Facebook and Twitter
- Variety of training opportunities statewide
- Technical assistance via telephone, email, and on-site visits



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, Anthropologist



Contact Information

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