

SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT Council News

"Civic Engagement in Public Education"



Volume 35, Issue 1, 2013

It's SIC Election and Member Reporting Time!

Has your SIC held its annual member elections for 2013-14? The statutory deadline for election of parent and teacher SIC members (and students, in the case of high schools) is October 15.

As part of the SIC elections process, solicit nominations (people can self-nominate or nominate others), asking for brief bios on nominees and why they'd like to be elected to your SIC. Include these bios (and a picture if possible) on your ballot materials. Elections can be conducted by paper ballot sent home with students, at open houses, during PTA/PTO meetings, and at faculty meetings.

Remember that parents are to elect other parents, teachers elect fellow teachers, and students elect their peers to serve on the SIC. Make sure to advertise both the nominations process and elections in your school newsletter, on your school marquee, the school's website, and by any other means you believe will maximize participation.

All SICs are also reminded that the

statutory deadline for reporting local SIC membership information to the SC-SIC office through the online SC-SIC Member Network is November 15.

If they have not already done so, Member Network account users will need to update their log-in and password information for the current school year. Directions for this are available on the SC-SIC Member Network site accessible through the SC-SIC website, <http://sic.sc.gov>, or by contacting SC-SIC Digital and Web Director Claudia Wolverton by email at wolvento@mailbox.sc.edu.

If your school is a new or re-organized school not listed in the SC-SIC Member Network, please email Ms. Wolverton to assist you in getting your SIC established in the database.

Reporting your SIC members through the Member Network is not only an accountability requirement of state law, but assists the SC-SIC office by providing the data needed to contact local SIC members throughout the year.

Has Your District Scheduled SIC Training This Fall?

The fall semester of each school year is typically the busiest training season for the SC School Improvement Council, although trainings are conducted across the state throughout the year.

Now is the time to think about scheduling trainings for your SIC members for 2013-14. Whether it's training conducted by one of our certified SIC District Contacts or district-wide training provided by SC-SIC staff, such sessions are vital to new and more seasoned SIC members

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See "Has Your District Scheduled SIC Training This Fall?"

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Proud of the work your SIC has accomplished? Apply for the Riley Award

It's that time of year for local SICs to prepare their applications for SC-SIC's annual Dick and Tunky Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence. This award was created in 2002 to recognize the significant contributions made to public education by the more than 14,000 School Improvement Council members and the 1,100-plus SICs which serve every public school in South Carolina.

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Message from... the Executive Director

Cassie Barber, M.A.

Got questions? We have answers.

Fall is in the air and School Improvement Councils statewide are gathering around conference tables and getting to work. Are you a seasoned SIC member or is this your first time to serve on a Council? Either way you may be glancing around the table wondering what you got yourself into! Who else is sitting at the table? Are the right people there to get the job done? What is our job? Who do we know? Who can we work with? Who is missing? What are we supposed to do? So many questions! Where can you get the answers?

The SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) can help. Our job is to support you with training, information, resources, and technical assistance. Your district office can help too. Each school district is required by law to choose a liaison – an SIC District Contact – to work with the state office and earlier this month we hosted training for them to get the year off to a good start. SC-SIC also prints a handbook each year, *The Basics*, that is a handy resource for SIC members to learn about state laws governing Councils, information on membership, bylaws, and exactly what SICs are charged to do. These handbooks are available through your district office.

Each district should also offer training on the basic roles and responsibilities for Councils, led either by the SIC District Contact or staff from the SC-SIC office. There is no charge to you for this training. We also offer trainings on Leadership and Advocacy, Communications, Goal Setting and other topics, which are available on a limited basis.

Do you know who your SIC District Contact is? If not, please visit our website <http://sic.sc.gov> and look for the “SIC Basics” tab on the left hand side of the page and you will find a heading for “SIC District Contacts.” While you are there, please take a full tour of our website. You will find a lot of interesting, helpful information on our user-friendly site. Everything from a bylaws template (no need to start from scratch with your own!), to the latest research on parent engagement, to new laws being introduced at the General Assembly – and oh yes, free stuff! Need inspiration? Visit our Riley Award page to find out what exemplary SICs have accomplished in every corner of our state.

Can't find what you are looking for? Type it into the Search Box at the top of the page. Still can't find it? Call us – 1-800-868-2232 – and we will help you. Helping you is why we are here. Call us at any time of the year with any questions, concerns or successes you want to share. I invite you to share your successes with us so we can highlight your SIC and share your good work with others. At the SC School Improvement Council we want your SIC to be the best it can be so our students can be they can be. Please consider us a ready resource to help you in this important work.



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SC Economics brings activity-based resources to teachers, parents and students

by Jim Morris

SC Economics, formerly the SC Council on Economic Education, is the catalyst for advanced economic education in South Carolina. As the only non-profit organization that is exclusively dedicated to improving economic education and financial literacy, SC Economics prepares teachers and students to be active, successful, and productive members of our global economy.

SC Economics has been actively helping teachers throughout the state to teach economics for more than 40 years. It offers workshops and programs to fill gaps in teacher knowledge, skills and abilities in economic fundamentals, as well as evolving financial literacy competencies, covering the range of K-12 students and their teachers.



Poster competitions stressing basic fundamentals such as scarcity and opportunity cost are engaging and fun for elementary students. The “Mini Economy” is a middle school project based learning environment where the teacher transforms student learning by creating a miniature economics system in

the classroom. The “Stock Market Game” is a middle and high school real life investment simulation that advances students’ achievement in the core academic disciplines. The “SC Finance Challenge” is a financial literacy competition that tests students’ knowledge of saving and investing, spending and credit, and income and money management. The “SC Econ Challenge” pits 3-5 person teams against other teams from the state in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and International Economics. Many of SC Economics’ state competitions crown student winners that advance to national level competitions.

In addition to its well-known competitions, this year SC Economics is adapting its teaching techniques to embrace online, interactive learning, specifically with a program called “Financial Flix,” which provides engaging, peer-to-peer video content. Many of the videos relate directly to the 2005 SC Financial Literacy Education Act and state educational standards addressing concepts like credit, spending, saving, and budgeting. With online resources and video capabilities, learning now becomes accessible anytime, anywhere and by anyone in the state. This new learning module opens the door

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School Wide Physical Activity: Join the Movement with PACES!

by Collin A. Webster, Ph.D.

Obesity has become one of the most challenging public health issues of the 21st century. In the past thirty years, national obesity rates have doubled for adults and adolescents, and tripled for children. Obesity is associated with a wide range of health disparities and it costs our country billions of dollars in health care annually. Fortunately, obesity is preventable, and schools can play a major role in its prevention.

Recently, the prestigious Institute of Medicine released a consensus report that listed school-based physical activity as one



of the key action goals to accelerate obesity prevention. Recommendations focus on a school wide approach to physical activity promotion. Specific strategies include providing daily physical education with at least 50 percent of class time devoted to moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, as well as providing daily physical activity opportunities outside of physical education, such as active recess, classroom-based physical activity, and physical activity programs before and after school. These strategies can help kids reach the national guideline of 60 minutes or more of physical activity every day. Presently, many youth are not meeting this important health guideline.

There are several reasons why schools are being prioritized in the fight against obesity. Children and adolescents learn physical activity habits during their school years, and these habits “track” into adulthood. Schools offer an existing infrastructure for helping youth develop healthy lifestyle habits. The school environment provides safe and ample space for kids to be physically active under the supervision and direction of professional educators. Moreover, schools have extended access to youth: virtually all kids attend school most of their waking hours, most days of the week, most weeks of the year.

Some educators hesitate to adopt school practices that increase time spent in physical activity because they believe these practices will impede academic goals. However, research provides categorical evidence that school-based physical activity not only doesn’t harm academic performance, but may also improve it. Additionally, many recommended strategies for increasing school-based physical activity are designed to integrate with current educational practices and existing resources, rather than add to them. For example, a number of schools have successfully increased students’ physical activity by infusing physical activity into academic lessons, demarcating space on the playground to give students more physical activity options, and allowing students to use a gym or field for physical activity during lunchtime.

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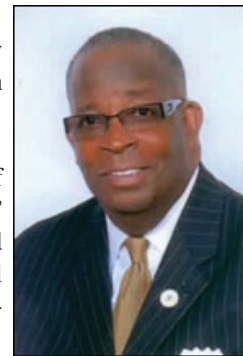
Two named to SC-SIC Board of Trustees



Thessa G. Smith

Rev. James B. Blessingame of Sumter and Thessa G. Smith of Allendale have recently been named to the SC School Improvement Council Board of Trustees, Board Chair Ellen M. Still has announced.

“These two individuals demonstrate a great deal of passion for and understanding of public education and its significant impact on the future economic health of our state,” said Ms. Still. “We are very fortunate to have them and their expertise on our Board, and we look forward to partnering with them in the coming years as we help the SC School Improvement Council to provide vital services to our schools, our children and our communities.”



Rev. James B.
Blessingame

Ms. Smith was appointed to fill an unexpired term on the SC-SIC Board, and Rev. Blessingame was elected to a full three-year term representing their respective regions of the state. The Board is composed of 21 members from all corners of South Carolina and acts in an advisory capacity to the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC), which serves more than 14,000 members of local School Improvement Councils in the state’s 1,100-plus K-12 public schools.

Rev. Blessingame, a Seneca native, has served as Pastor of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Sumter since 1984. A substitute elementary teacher in the Sumter School District, he also currently serves as President of the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina, and First Assistant Secretary of the National Baptist Convention USA, Secretary of the Morris College Board of Trustees, Immediate Past Moderator of the Sumter Baptist Missionary and Educational Association, and Field Education Supervisor for Princeton (NJ) Theological Seminary.

A US Army veteran and life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Rev. Blessingame has served as a member of the School Improvement Councils of Lemira Elementary and Chestnut Oaks Middle schools in Sumter. He also serves on the Sumter School District Community Advisory Board, the Bank of Clarendon Sumter Advisory Board, the board of Sumter Senior Services, Inc., the Benedict College Board of Trustees, and as a representative on the Third Judicial Circuit Citizens Committee on Judicial Qualifications.

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Thirteen named to prestigious education policy program

Thirteen (13) professional and civic leaders from across South Carolina have been selected to participate in the SC Education Policy Fellowship Program (SC-EPFP) for 2013-14.



SC-EPFP is a 10-month intensive professional development program for established and emerging leaders in education and related fields to help equip them in working toward sound education policy and practice in South Carolina. SC-EPFP Fellows participate in a variety of activities that promote leadership, develop professional networks, demystify education policy, and foster a greater understanding of the roles of government and the community.

This year’s SC-EPFP participants are: Nichole B. Boseman, Principal, Wren High School, Anderson School District One; Dr. Shawn Clark, Board Member, SC Assoc. for Supervision & Curriculum Development, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Saluda County Schools; Tammy Garrett-Greer, Principal, Boiling Springs Intermediate School, Spartanburg School District 2; Susan R. Hargrove, Lead Teacher, York Preparatory Academy, SC Public Charter School District; Kelvin Lemon, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, Middle/Secondary Education, Marlboro County School District; Amelia Butler McKie, Principal/President, Nfusion, LLC, Columbia; Dr. Jerry T. Mitchell, Research Associate Professor/Coordinator, SC Geographic Alliance, University of South Carolina; James M. Morris IV, Chief Executive Officer, SC Economics, Columbia; Sherry Y. Prioleau, Assistant Director of Business Relations-SC GEAR UP, SC Chamber of Commerce; Katrina Frye Shealy, State Senator, SC Senate, District 23, Lexington County; David M. Smalls, State Director, Communities In Schools of SC; Dr. Theresa Riley Stephens, Public Information Officer, Richland School District Two; and Bunnie L. Ward, Director of Early Education & Policy, United Way of the Midlands.

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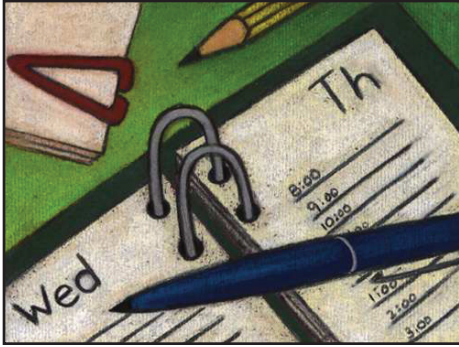
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“Has Your District Scheduled SIC Training This Fall?”

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so that they can know more about their roles and responsibilities to their school communities.



Primary SC-SIC training offerings include “SIC Basics” (intended for new SIC members) and “SIC Leadership and Advocacy” (designed for more seasoned members). The SC-SIC staff can also provide district-wide training on other topic areas such as “Communicating with the Greater School Community,” “Crafting the SIC Report to the Parents,” and “Applying for the SC-SIC Riley Award.” If an individual SIC would like to learn more about establishing its working priorities for the year, sessions on “SIC Goal Setting” can be arranged on a limited, case-by-case basis.

Other subject areas which may be of interest to SICs can be found on the SC-SIC website, <http://sic.sc.gov> under the “Training Resources” tab. Provided by partner organizations, these are outlined by topic, and include contact and other pertinent information so that SICs can contact training providers directly to schedule their sessions.

Schedule your training today as the training schedule can fill up quickly! For more on SIC training opportunities and the current training schedule, visit the SC-SIC website.

“School Wide Physical Activity: Join the Movement with PACES!”

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South Carolina is currently the fifth most obese state in the country. State legislation was passed in 2005 (The Student Health and Fitness Act) requiring all state-funded elementary schools to provide 60 minutes of physical education and 90 minutes of additional physical activity opportunities each week. However, schools have received limited support for achieving physical activity goals.

This is why the University of South Carolina, in partnership with the SC School Improvement Council, has begun an initiative designed to give schools the resources they need to effectively promote physical activity across the school day. This initiative is called PACES (Promoting Active School Communities for Excellence in Schools), and its objective is to increase the physical activity of school communities to ensure excellence in school outcomes. PACES will offer schools the following services:

- Evaluating the physical activity needs of school communities
- Determining the most effective physical activity promotion strategies for school communities
- Offering professional workshops and continuing education to school staff for developing physical activity promotion strategies
- Working with students’ families and community organizations to enhance physical activity promotion
- Sending trained physical activity promoters to school communities on a regular basis to increase physical activity of students, staff, and families

Schools and school districts with an interest in these services can take advantage of them through the contact information following this article.

The call for schools to take charge in the fight against obesity is urgent and clear. It is time to respond and reach our potential in education to prepare youth for a healthier future. We cannot afford to sit and wait; we must all join the movement and step into pace with school wide physical activity promotion.

- Dr. Collin Webster is Assistant Professor of Physical Education Pedagogy with the USC College of Education’s Department of Physical Education and Athletic Training. He can be reached at (803) 719-2266 or websterc@mailbox.sc.edu.

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to more opportunities for South Carolina citizens to gain the skills necessary to be active, responsible and productive members of our economy. Parents and nonprofits can use these videos in support of teaching finance related soft skills. (More information on “Financial Flix” can be found online at www.sceconomics.org. Click “Resources,” or go directly to <http://www.fichannels.com/sce/>.

SC Economics knows that it can’t do it alone. Partnerships with other organizations having similar interests must be developed in order to have a more expansive reach on economic education and financial literacy in South Carolina. Through the state’s School Improvement Councils, SC Economics has close working relationships with many school districts upon which it will continue to build. In addition to the school networks, there are exciting educational initiatives being created around the state by many other organizations. Financial literacy and economic education has to be a collaborative effort if we want to improve our state’s economic status.

SC Economics wants to be recognized as the most valued organization in South Carolina for improving economic education and financial literacy for K-12 students and teachers, and it is expanding its resources to support this effort and the needs of South Carolina citizens.

Economics and financial literacy need to be taught not only as subjects in school, but as vital life skills to survive. Instilling economic and financial literacy in our children as young as age 5, and continuing to teach these concepts through grade 12 and beyond, is essential to the well-being of our nation. An economically literate citizenry will have far reaching positive outcomes for South Carolina.

The economic transformation has begun in South Carolina, and SC Economics is fueling the progress.

- Jim Morris is CEO of SC Economics. Contact Jim at jim.morris@moore.sc.edu or by calling (803) 777-8729.

SC Economics is a statewide organization created to help aid teachers with the resources they need to make students in K-12 classrooms economically and financially literate. If you are interested in supporting the economic education initiative, or just want more information, please visit www.sceconomics.org

“Apply for the Riley Award”

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The award is named in honor of former SC Governor and US Education Secretary Dick Riley and his late wife, Tunky, and recognizes the couple’s longstanding commitment to quality public education in our state and the nation.

Any SIC that has been convened for more than one year is eligible to apply and every applicant can become an Honor Roll SIC through the Level One competition. Five of the Honor Roll SICs will be chosen to compete for the Riley Award which will be presented to a single SIC on March 22, 2014 during the SIC Annual Meeting in Columbia. Competing in Level One is a great way to take stock of your SIC’s accomplishments and to make sure all the foundational components of an effective Council in place.

The deadline for Level One applications for the 2014 Riley Award is Friday, November 22. For more information on the Riley Award, including application materials, award process timeline, and other award information and guidelines, visit the SC-SIC website at <http://sic.sc.gov> and click on the “Awards and Recognitions” tab.

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- Feel important
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MEETINGS

THE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO WORK

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Need help? Call us!***

“Two named to SC-SIC Board of Trustees”

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Rev. Blessingame holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Morris College and the bachelor of Divinity degree from the Morris School of Religion. He was awarded the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Morris College in 2000, and received the Mamie L. Duckett Founder’s Day Award from Benedict College in 2006.

Ms. Smith has served as County Administrator for Allendale County since 2012, having previously served as Assistant County Manager and Zoning Administrator for Greenwood County beginning in 1999. She also is currently an Adjunct Professor of human resource management, supervision, organizational behavior, and business ethics and strategy with Southern Wesleyan University. She previously held several management and coordinator positions with GLEAMNS Human Resources, Inc., in Greenwood, as well as those of Procurement Manager for Flexible Technologies in Abbeville, and Senior Electronics Buyer with FL Aerospace, Grimes Division, in Greenwood.

Pastor of Mt. Carmel United Methodist Church in Ninety Six, Ms. Smith is a past PTSO President and School Improvement Council member for Greenwood High School, and previously served on the SC-SIC Board of Trustees from 2002 to 2008. She is Immediate Past President of the South Carolina Personnel Association, and serves on the boards of the South Carolina City and County Managers Association, Southern Carolina Alliance, The Palmetto Bank, and as an alternate board member for Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority. A Client Advocate for Habitat for Humanity, Ms. Smith is also a past Board Chair for Greenwood County First Steps and past Commissioner for the GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission, and is a former member of the SC Department of Social Services Citizen Review Board and the Board of Visitors for Piedmont Technical College.

Ms. Smith holds the Master of Science degree in Management from Southern Wesleyan University, the Master of Divinity degree from Erskine Theological Seminary, the Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Limestone College, and an Early Childhood Certificate from Piedmont Technical College.

“Thirteen named to prestigious education policy program”

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“Our commitment and success in educating our children has a profound impact on the economic health of South Carolina” said Robert E. Barnett, Associate VP for Workforce, Education and Manufacturing Policy with the SC Chamber of Commerce and SC-EPFP Advisory Board Chair.

“Some of our state’s most talented and dedicated leaders are represented in this year’s Fellows,” Barnett said. “We are very pleased to bring them together to learn new skills, develop added insight and work collaboratively to take action in improving our state’s future through education improvement and reform.”

Fellows will meet monthly throughout the academic year for full-day dialogues, exercises and group projects, in addition to an overnight in-state Fall Leadership Forum and a four-day Washington Policy Seminar hosted by the Institute for Educational Leadership.

The SC-EPFP operates under the auspices of the national Education Policy Fellowship Program of the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC, which oversees Fellowship programs in 12 states and the District of Columbia. In South Carolina the program is coordinated by the SC School Improvement Council, located in the University of South Carolina College of Education, with the assistance of the SC Department of Education’s Office of School Leadership.

SC-EPFP is supported by an advisory board providing cross-disciplinary leadership representing the state’s K-12 education, higher education and business communities.

For additional information on the SC Education Policy Fellowship Program, visit the SC-EPFP page online at <http://sic.sc.gov/sceducationpolicyfellowshipprogram/Pages/index.aspx>.

