SC-EPFP Now Accepting Applications for 2017-18

The SC Education Policy Fellowship Program (SC-EPFP) – a 10-month professional development program for established and emerging leaders in education and related fields designed to work toward the implementation of sound education policy and practice in South Carolina – is now accepting applications through August 18, 2017, for the 2017-18 academic year.

SC-EPFP operates under the auspices of the national Education Policy Fellowship Program (*http://epfp.iel.org*) of the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) in Washington, DC, which oversees Fellowship programs offered through 16 state sites and in the District of Columbia. In South Carolina the

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Literacy Projects for SICs: Building Classroom Libraries in Elementary Schools

by Karen Utter, SC-SIC Coordinator of Council Services

For many elementary schools, improving student reading and writing is a key area of focus. There are a number of ways that SICs can support their schools in reaching this improvement goal. We have collected some suggested SIC literacy goals and projects for elementary, middle, and high schools. These can be accessed on the SC-SIC website at *http://sic.sc.gov/Pages/ReadtoSucceedAct.aspx*.
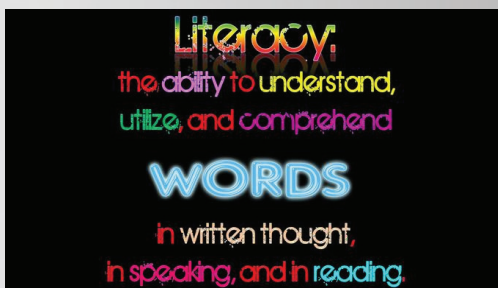

Image source: http://literacy-in-maths.wikispaces.com/file/view/Literacy%20 Definition.jpg/366543186/683x387/Literacy%20Definition.jpg

One great project for SICs in this area is supporting the creation and growth of classroom libraries. A quality classroom library supports literacy instruction and promotes reading growth. It can also help level the playing field for students from lower-income families who do not have easy access to a wide variety of books and other texts.

As always, it's important to talk to teachers and reading coaches first to find out what their needs are before moving forward with a project. Needs could include:

• A wide variety of books and other types of reading material that are age appropriate and that cover a broad range of reading levels. Recommendations for the size of a classroom library include 10 books for every one student with a minimum of 100-200 books total. The number of books, however, should not take priority over the quality of the books. Libraries need books that contain quality content and that are in good condition. In addition to recommendations by teachers and reading coaches, there are a number of websites such as the American Library Association (ALA) (*www.ala.org*) that can help your SIC identify a variety of different types of high quality books.

Message from the Executive Director

Tom F. Hudson

Yet another school year is over and the months of summer sun are upon us. While the coming months will be ones for times of fun, vacations, and memories made with families, they can also offer a bit of time for local School Improvement Councils to look ahead to another academic year.

At SC-SIC, we urge Councils to start contemplating their work for the upcoming year. What goals do they want to strive for in 2017-18 to help their schools and students? Are there goals from 2016-17 that are being carried over? Did strategies work or is there need for adjustment based on reviewed results? Did these efforts tie into the school's Five-Year Plan?

SICs can be better prepared for the new school year by asking these questions now – while school is out – so they can get a jump on the new school year come August.

It's also now time for local SICs to work with their district's SIC District Contact in planning for training Council members. Whether it's "SIC Basics" training or more advanced offerings such as "SIC Leadership" or "SIC Goal Setting," SC-SIC staff stand ready to conduct district-wide and some individual sessions to help local members with their SIC work. SIC Chairs and/or principals can get in touch with their District Contact to arrange such training, and can check the statewide training schedule posted online at http://sic.sc.gov.

A relatively new feature on SC-SIC's website is a series of three, short videos pertaining to "SIC Basics." Local Council members may want to look at these online over the summer to prepare for their SIC's activities in the new school year.

This is also the time for district superintendents to appoint their designated SIC District Contact for the coming school year. Often this will be the same district-level staff member as last year, but personnel situations do change. Superintendents can expect a letter and a designation form the SC-SIC office very soon asking them name their District Contact for 2017-18.

Can We Protect Student Data in a Digital World?

by Claudia Parnell, SC-SIC Digital and Web Director

According to *edglossary.org*, student data "refers to any information that educators, schools, districts, or states collect on individual students enrolled in public schools." At first glance, the term may seem to have emerged fairly recently in today's technology-driven educational environment, but schools have always maintained student records that detailed a student's age, gender, address, etc., as well as enrollment and academic information.

What has changed in recent decades is the transition from paper-based systems to digital systems. This has given rise to the consideration of issues such as student privacy and the collection, storage, and use of student-level data. While the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was passed in 1974 to protect a child's data, subsequent revisions have somewhat weakened it and driven many states to create their own laws. The following is a look at what we refer to when we speak of "student data" in the world of education today and current concerns about student privacy.

Image source: http://www.rmmagazine.com/2015/09/01/navigating-student-data-privacy-laws/

When a child enters school, his/her personal information is recorded. This includes name, gender, date of birth, and Social Security Number. Health data is also documented, consisting of information about vaccinations, prescribed medications, allergies, disabilities, and so on. Family income details may also be gathered to see if the child qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch. The data is uploaded into the school district's database, which may or may not be maintained by a separate entity or stored in the "cloud." Administration personnel, teachers, and parents have access to all or pieces of this profile. A certain amount of the information is shared with the state's department of education and tracked through the statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS); it is often used for accountability and evaluation purposes. It may also be shared with companies that provide services to the school and district.

The district will create a lunch account for the student and likely enroll her in one or more digital education platforms, such as Google's "G Suite for Education." If the school uses a digital classroom management tool designed to improve student behavior and enhance teacher-parent communications, an account will be created within that system. Many schools today use ID cards, particularly middle and high schools, which are issued by the district. If the student connects to the school Wi-Fi with a smartphone or tablet, his/her login and browsing information may be tracked by the internet provider and the school district. All of the information gathered by the various systems becomes a part of the student-level data portfolio.

If a school uses an education method known as "personalized learning" and lessons are delivered online via an outside source, the technology company used by the school may determine content and difficulty levels of the lessons by collecting the data generated by the student's answers to quizzes or responses when using video games to learn. The company can then use algorithms to analyze aptitude, interests, evaluate interests, and anticipate outcomes. This data is shared with the school but can also be retained by the company.

As the student progresses through school, his/her education record grows to include grades, class schedules, standardized test scores, disciplinary information, counseling records, disabilities, any Individualized Education Plans, and health conditions requiring medications or special access. Information on the student's family history, racial and ethnic background, country of birth, whether he/she is an immigrant or homeless, and what special services the student receives may also be included. If the student uses a district-provided device, internet activity may be collected. This could include sites visited, search terms used, material read or watched online, and passwords. By middle school, the student may be using a college planning and career assessment tool to set personal and academic goals to plan for higher education or post-high school career. If he/she enrolls in online courses or instructional apps in addition to regular classes, the company offering the course can collect millions of data points every time the student logs in. The information provided to the online company may be used to advertise products or services to students or parents based on personal data. In high school, if the student takes AP courses and exams, the PSAT, SAT, and/or the ACT, the data generated is amassed in his/her file.

Parent/Student Resources Now Available for the Summer Months

The SC Education Oversight Committee (EOC) is providing some useful online resources for parents and students over the summer months.

The SC Family-Friendly Standards are updated and available for Grades K-12 for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. These guides provide information about what students should be learning at each grade level, along with books and resources to enhance the learning at school. The guides are also available in Spanish. To access the guides, visit *http://www.scfriendlystandards.org/*.

New this year, Help with Math SC is an online resource to help families and others find assistance and materials based on the SC College and Career-Ready Standards in Mathematics. The materials, developed by math educators from SC, are available for K-7th grade. This resource can be accessed at *https://helpwithmathsc.org*.

To visit the full EOC website, go to *www.eoc.sc.gov*.

SCDE Seeks Comment on State's Draft ESSA Plan

The SC Department of Education is reaching out to local School Improvement Council members and others across the state for review and comments on South Carolina's draft Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Plan, which will be submitted to the US Department of Education by mid-September, 2017.

The full SC draft plan can be viewed online at *http://www.ed.sc.gov/newsroom/every-student-succeeds-act-essa/draft-essa-consolidated-plan*.

Additional resources, including PowerPoint presentations and webinar recordings can also be found on SCDE's ESSA web page at *http://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/every-student-succeeds-act-essa*.

While SCDE would like to receive comments by June 23, 2017, it will welcome them up to the date the plan is to be submitted to the US Department of Education. Comments can be sent to SCDE at *essa.comments@ed.sc.gov*. Questions may be directed to the State Department of Education at (803) 734-8500.

SC-SIC Board of Trustees Seeks Nominations

The SC School Improvement Council Board of Trustees is composed of individuals from every region of South Carolina and serves in an advisory capacity to the SC-SIC office and staff. Board members are elected to three-year terms; vacancies for unexpired terms are appointed by the Board Chair.

The Board will be conducting its annual elections in July for the Class of 2020, and it seeks individuals willing to serve and assist the work of SC-SIC statewide.

Members of the Board represent a variety of personal and professional backgrounds (parents, educators, school administrators, current SIC members, business representatives, and more), and the Board strives to maintain its diversity. This year, the Board is seeking representatives specifically from the Midlands and Pee Dee regions.

If you know someone who has a demonstrated commitment to public education, or if you yourself are interested in serving on the SC-SIC Board, nominate that person or self-nominate for consideration for Board membership. Just send a resume and letter of interest to SC-SIC Executive Director Tom F. Hudson at hudsontf@mailbox.sc.edu, by July 21, 2017.

More information on the SC-SIC Board of Trustees can be found on the SC-SIC website at *http://sic.sc.gov/aboutscsic/Pages/SC-SICBoardofTrustees.aspx*.

"Protecting Student Data"

The longer these systems and devices are used by the student, the more data points are accumulated, reaching into the millions or even billions. These can be mined to diagnose learning issues or guide a student towards particular courses or careers. It is also used to reform education systems and provide more accurate, useful, and detailed information about performance to those working to improve schools. But of particular concern to student privacy advocates, the information can also be used to generate a consumer profile that can be marketed by data brokers if not closely guarded. By the time the student graduates, his/her education record will span over 13 years. Each year, much of the data in the student's record was sent to the statewide longitudinal data system, where it may have been linked to other state agency databases and/or passed along to researchers. At any point in his/her educational career, a student's personal data, whether held by the school, state or federal agencies, researchers, or online vendors, may have been misused, breached, or hacked. So what can be done to protect student-level data?

Clear governance policies
Create policies to control who has access to specific data and define procedures for how data is managed throughout the lifecycle, from acquisition to use and disposal, and monitor and adjust them as circumstances change.

Lock down access
Institute a modern identity and access management (IAM) solution to ensure that only authorized users have access to data.

Manage data with precision
Security relies on tight control of what data is synchronized and with whom. For example, a textbook vendor doesn't require access to students' home addresses.

Randomize data
Generate unique usernames that are not tied to the user, thereby making the data anonymous.

Use encryption
Data should be encrypted when stored and transmitted so that it is rendered unusable by an unauthorized party.

"Vet" vendors
Only work with vendors that have taken the student data privacy pledge (*https://studentprivacypledge.org/*) if they will collect or handle student data. Vendors that comply with the pledge's guidelines are much more likely to take student data privacy seriously.

Technology moves at lightning speeds. New applications and the search for customized learning experiences make student data privacy a complicated issue. All stakeholders should work together to focus on securing students' interactions with technology to protect them for the future.

Parent Coalition for Student Privacy, 2017, https://www.studentprivacymatters.org/toolkit/. Accessed 25 May. 2017.

"6 things schools can do to ensure student data privacy." eSchool News, 25 May. 2017, http://www.eschoolnews.com/2016/10/19/6-things-schools-can-ensure-student-data-privacy/.

"SC-EPFP Now Accepting Applications"

program is coordinated by the SC School Improvement Council, located in the University of South Carolina's College of Education.

SC-EPFP meets monthly September through June (primarily in Columbia) for a full day of dialogues, interactive exercises, small group projects, book discussions, and more. An overnight Leadership Forum is scheduled in the fall and a four-day Washington Policy Seminar hosted by the Institute for Educational Leadership is held in the nation's capital in March.

Educators may qualify for recertification or certificate renewal credits, and graduate credits may also be available.

For more on SC-EPFP, including additional program information, application materials, tuition and travel costs, and scholarship opportunities, call the SC-SIC office at 1-800-868-2232 or go online to *http://sic.sc.gov/sceducationpolicyfellowshipprogram/Pages/index.aspx.*

"Literacy Projects for SICs"

- Books that are culturally relevant to students as well as books that expose them to new and different worlds.

- Items that create a warm, inviting space for reading. These could include things like pillows, soft rugs, rocking chairs, colorful wall art, and stuffed animals.

- Labeling books by reading level, format, genre, or topic. For example, several years ago, Brennan Elementary's SIC in Columbia labeled over 5,000 books by reading level using the Accelerated Reader website (*www.acceleratedreader.com*) to help students select Just Right books.

- Items that help organize the space and reading materials, such as bins or shelves, or supplies needed to create a system for checking out and returning books.

We've added a link on our SC-SIC *Read to Succeed* webpage to a great article, *Building an Effective Classroom Library*, (*http://sic.sc.gov/Pages/ReadtoSucceedAct.aspx*) that contains a comprehensive, step-by-step approach to creating a quality elementary classroom library. Another approach to creating a classroom library, Creating a Classroom Library, by Mandy Gregory, can be found on the Reading Rockets website at *http://www.readingrockets.org/article/creating-classroom-library*.

If your SIC is undertaking projects to support literacy development at your school, we'd love to hear about it! Send us an email at *utter@mailbox.sc.edu*.

"From the Executive Director"

At SC-SIC we're also planning ahead for the coming school year, reviewing the resources and materials we provide local SICs, and looking for fresher and more effective ways in which we can assist you in your very important work. Please continue to check our website for new tools and resources, as well as news on upcoming events.

Thank you so for very much for your SIC work this past school year. We look forward to serving you and working with you again for 2017-18. Local SICs undertake very valuable work on behalf of their schools and students year in and year out – and SC School Improvement Council is proud and willing to help in those efforts in any way possible.

Here's to a safe and enjoyable summer!