

# SC-SIC Council News



**"Civic Engagement at Work for Public Education"**

Volume 38, Issue 3, 2017

## What Every Family Should Know About SC Read to Succeed

by  
Karen Utter, SC-SIC Coordinator of  
Council Services

The SC Read to Succeed Act, enacted in 2014, stresses the importance of reading and writing at every grade level to ensure that students are college and career ready when they graduate from high school.

The law provides schools with a comprehensive framework for providing high quality instruction in grades pre-K through 12. To ensure that problems are identified and addressed as soon as possible, schools must regularly assess student progress in reading and provide struggling readers with extra help that is targeted to their needs until they reach grade level.

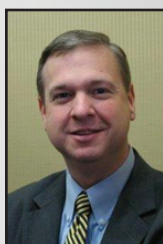
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## Three Join SC-SIC Board of Trustees

W. Andrew "Andy" Beeson of Lexington, Robert Grant of Orangeburg, and Trevor T. Ivey of Sumter have recently joined the SC School Improvement Council Board of Trustees.



W. Andrew Beeson

"We are very fortunate to have these three very committed individuals join the SC-SIC Board of Trustees," said Board Chair Amelia B. McKie. "We look forward to their contributions as we assist the SC School Improvement Council in providing vital and impactful services to our state's schools, our children, and our communities."

The SC-SIC Board of Trustees is composed of members from all corners of South Carolina and acts in an advisory capacity to SC-SIC, which serves some 14,000 members of local School Improvement Councils in each of the state's 1,100-plus K-12 public schools.

Mr. Beeson serves as Chief Counsel for the Legislative Council of the South Carolina General Assembly. He was previously Senior Staff Attorney for the South Carolina Court of Appeals and served in private practice. Additionally, he has served as a member of the South Carolina Bar's Ethics Advisory and Professional Responsibility committees, and was an editorial board member of the bar's South Carolina Lawyer publication.



Robert Grant

In the community, Mr. Beeson is a current member of the Meadow Glen Elementary (Lexington District 1) School Improvement Council and the Providence Presbyterian Church Child Development Center Board of Directors.



Trevor T. Ivey

He holds the BA degree in Government from Wofford College, and the Master of Mass Communication and Juris Doctor degrees from the University of South Carolina.

Mr. Grant returns to the SC-SIC Board, having previously served from 2010-16. A career educator, he has served in several school districts in South Carolina as a

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# Message from the Executive Director

*Tom F. Hudson*



It's hard to believe that we're about to begin a new calendar year. And this time – particularly at New Year's – can be a time of reflections and of resolutions.

Some anonymous sage put it this way: "Many people look forward to the New Year for a new start on old habits." I would prefer to view it as an opportunity to continue positive commitments and strive to undertake new ones.

In the past several years, we at the SC School Improvement Council have resolved to do all we can to focus on providing services, resources, and information to the 1,100-plus SICs across the state which endeavor month in and month out to work on goals to advance the lives and success of their schools. We've offered more trainings, additional services, and new resources for SICs – so that they might have the tools and information they need to carry out the responsibilities set forth for them by the General Assembly.

We've fostered partnerships with other entities, improved our technological offerings, and leveraged multiple resources to be truly service-oriented for our local Councils. And while we have made what I believe to be great strides in our outreach, we have more work to do.

SC-SIC's resolution for the New Year is to continue on this path and to look for more ways through which we can provide you, our valued SIC members, the tools and insights you need to make positive and lasting change. Folks in your school communities look to you for that and it is our responsibility and honor to help make it happen.

What I would like to ask of our SIC members – whether parents, teachers, principals, students, community representatives, or others – is to take the opportunity presented by the dawning of the new year to continue their commitment and re-dedicate themselves to their Councils' efforts. Keep identifying needs, developing common goals, and focusing on strategies that can help your schools and students achieve what we all want for them – even brighter and more promising new years to come.

Reflections and resolutions – both are so important. We need to see where

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# How Schools Are Steering Social Media

## *Districts seek to balance creativity and experimentation with safety and privacy*

by  
David Raths, *District Administration Magazine*

Crafting a strong and well-balanced social media policy requires considerable time and effort. The policy must be flexible enough to accommodate new tech trends—such as anonymous messaging apps and livestreaming—yet thorough and specific enough to address a multitude of potentially troublesome scenarios involving students, faculty and staff.

When a few students at Eudora High School in Kansas used an anonymous Twitter account in 2013 to say horrible things about teachers, administrators and other students, there were repercussions in the halls of school the next day, with scuffles breaking out between students.

The district's social media policy makes it clear that even when cyberbullying takes place off-campus, the district will respond if the acts create a hostile environment at school. The students involved were eventually identified and suspended.

But Eudora also recognizes the positive potential of social media for students, faculty and staff. For instance, Eudora's local newspaper recently closed and students decided the high school newspaper's Facebook page could publish sports stories and details on other events, says Kristin Magette, Eudora Schools' director of communications.

"Teachers are encouraged to experiment and try different things, but they are operating with a net," she says.

### **Striking a balance**

Districts that are large enough to have a communications director on staff often find that person is the logical leader of social media policy planning. They partner with superintendents to bring stakeholders together, consult with legal counsel and present policy recommendations to school boards for approval.

Communications directors also partner with district technology leaders to create cultures that leverage social media and enforce policies on district networks. Scott McLeod, an associate professor of administrative leadership and policy studies at the University of Colorado Denver, says too many districts write policies that have a restrictive and punitive tone.

From 2012 to 2016, McLeod was director of learning, teaching and innovation for the Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency, which serves 40 small districts in northwest Iowa. Many administrators there said they were implementing 1-to-1 programs because they wanted students to be critical thinkers, technologically fluent and globally connected, he says.

"But then the policies, instead of sending the message 'yes, be powerful and go do meaningful work,' were all about no, no, no," McLeod says. "The policies are working against some of the stated learning goals."

Districts with a different mindset focus on empowerment, he adds. Instead of writing an "acceptable use policy," he has encouraged districts to write an "empowered use policy." It could say, "Yes, you have the right to connect to others to facilitate your learning. Yes, teachers have the right to use online environments to further their career goals," he says.

Protecting student privacy is paramount, but using social media as a contemporary communication tool is also very important, says Brad Saron, superintendent of the Sun Prairie Area School District in Wisconsin.

"I like the concept of 'yes, and' when you are trying to figure out the push-pull between those opposite poles," he says. "Yes, we are going to leverage social media as a modern communication tool to inform the public, engage parents and allow students to dialog. We also are going to protect students' privacy."

In Eudora, for example, a parent called a principal upset because a coach was posting team practices on a YouTube channel to help the players see their progress over the season. But this parent's child was embarrassed by the way her body looked in the videos.

Magette - author of the book *Embracing Social Media: A Practical Guide to Manage Risk and Leverage Opportunity* - says there was nothing objectively inappropriate about posting the videos, but there was a disconnect between intent and reception. "That helps us become more sensitive," she adds.

The videos were shared with the team, but not posted to the rest of the world on social media.

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# Twelve Characteristics Distinguishing Schools of Engagement

Schools that effectively engage their stakeholders – parents, families, students, educators, and constituents – are places in which stakeholders know they belong, have an important role to play in advancing achievement, and are making a difference.

Here are 12 characteristics that distinguish a school of engagement:

- The school is welcoming.
- Hope for each child and family is pervasive.
- The school recognizes, honors, and accepts the gifts and talents of each student and everyone connected to the school.
- Families and teachers know each other and partner in many ways.
- The school fosters collective leadership.
- All school stakeholders know they are members of the inside group.
- There is a culture of trust, inclusiveness, and collaborative problem solving.
- Achievement data are readily available and used in making decisions.
- Many decision-making processes involve a wide range of stakeholders in deep conversations about issues.
- An expectation exists for mutual responsibility in the community – among school staff, families, surrounding businesses, and residents – for the success of each student.
- The capacity, supported by the district and community, for improving teaching and learning expands continuously, based on data collected about students, teachers, families, and the community.
- People perceive their schools as democracy at work



photo credit: <http://www.teachhub.com/tips-creating-welcoming-classroom-environment>

*Reprinted with permission from the copyrighted article "Twelve Characteristics Distinguishing Schools of Engagement," an excerpt from the book The Politics of Authentic Engagement: Tools for Engaging Stakeholders in Ensuring Student Success, available online through the National School Public Relations Association at [www.nspr.org/products](http://www.nspr.org/products), 15948 Derwood Rd., Rockville, MD 20855; [www.nspr.org](http://www.nspr.org); (301) 519-0496. No other reprints allowed without written permission from NSPRA.*

## 17 Named to SC Education Fellowship Policy Program

Seventeen (17) professional and civic leaders from across South Carolina have been selected to participate in the SC Education Policy Fellowship Program (SC-EPFP) for 2017-18.

SC-EPFP, coordinated by the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC), 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.



Members of the SC-EPFP class for 2017-18 are: Kimberly Ashby, Director of Elementary Schools, Spartanburg District 2; Rebecca Bean, Communications Manager, SC School Boards Association; Karen Buffalo, Assistant Principal, Alice Drive Elementary, Sumter County Schools; Terrie Campbell, District Accountability/Testing Coordinator, McCormick County School District; Kimberly Carraway, PreK-3 Teacher, D.P. Cooper Charter School, Salters; Toni Chewning, Director of Association Activities, Palmetto State Teachers Association; Melanie Cohen, Principal, River Springs Elementary, School District Five of Lexington-Richland Counties; Erin Fox, 2018 SC Teacher of the Year, Gaffney High, Cherokee County School District; Anita Hunter, Principal, Mayewood Middle, Sumter County Schools; Cheryl Lawson-Wilson, Assistant Principal, W.J. Keenan High, Richland School District 1; Jeffery Long, Director of Certified Employment Services, Richland School District 1; Tara Mack, Principal, St. Helena Elementary, Beaufort County School District; Mandy Powers Norrell, SC House of Representatives, District 44, Lancaster; Linda Norton, Principal, Watkins-Nance

Elementary, Richland School District 1; Ashley Roberts, Literacy Coach, Oakland Elementary, Spartanburg District 2; Erica Taylor, Chief Strategy and Communications Officer, Charleston County School District; and Cedric Wright, Assistant Principal, C.A. Johnson High, Richland School District 1.

*(continued)*

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# “How Schools Are Steering Social Media”

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## **Focus on behavior, not technology**

The Radnor Township School District near Philadelphia first created a social media task force of employees at the beginning of the 2012-13 school year. They held focus groups with parents, students and teachers; conducted a district-wide survey; and researched policies in the private sector and other districts.

Still, Radnor faces issues all the time as new social media applications appear. The district’s firewall blocks services such as Facebook, but teachers can override the block to use social media in classrooms.

“You can’t take a broad brush to social media,” says Michael Petitti, the district’s director of communications. “You have to examine each service for its merits.”

The district is currently figuring out how students can use Twitter, Facebook and Instagram productively. The district’s website offers several recommendations for teachers. One involves creating Facebook pages for famous historical figures. Petitti’s advice to districts still crafting social media rules is to focus on behavior, not particular technologies.

“When we were creating our policy five years ago, livestreaming wasn’t a thing,” he says. “If we had made our policy specific to the services that existed in 2012, we’d be having to rewrite it now.”

Once a policy is created, it is important that it has visibility with faculty and staff.

At every orientation for new teachers in August, Petitti runs a session on social media policy. Part of that is going over rules about when it is inappropriate to speak on behalf of the district on social media platforms.

## **Off-campus overreach?**

Superintendents and principals continue to struggle with how to respond when students misbehave on social media off-campus or post pictures of themselves doing illegal activities such as drinking alcohol.

“The chatter on social media is endless, and it is impossible to monitor 24/7,” Radnor’s Petitti says. “But when we hear of things affecting the instructional day, we take action. We communicate with parents, have speakers come in or have support for students in the counseling center.”

But McLeod warns against overreaching when regulating off-campus speech and behavior. The legal standard for taking action is when the behavior disrupts the school environment in a material and substantial way. When administrators over-interpret this they risk punishing a student for minor incidents—and getting into trouble themselves.

For instance, in 2014 a school district in Camden County, New Jersey, agreed to settle a student’s lawsuit by paying legal fees, dropping any punishment and clarifying its social media policy after the student claimed she was punished for tweeting profane comments about her principal in “purely off-campus speech,” according to the lawsuit.

Still, several administrators say their responses can serve as a learning opportunity when students make mistakes online. Joe Sanfelippo, superintendent in the Fall Creek School District in Wisconsin, says students on sports teams post updates on Twitter about their activities.

On a recent “senior skip day,” teams used foul language to criticize students who didn’t show up for school. The tweets appear on 50-inch monitors in the K12 school.

“I found one of these students and explained that we have 5-year olds who can read that,” Sanfelippo says. “He was shocked and five minutes later it was all gone. I didn’t have to call the parents or shut down the account. We treated them with respect. We talked about it and moved on.”

In some districts there is still a lot of fear about even small steps such as creating a school Facebook page. Many superintendents do not have Facebook or Twitter accounts, says Magette, of Eudora.

“You have to be comfortable supervising people who have skills and knowledge you don’t have,” she says. “Some leaders are much more comfortable in that zone than others.”

*David Rath is a Philadelphia-based writer who regularly covers edtech. Originally published in District Administration magazine [December 2017, 11/20/2017]. Used by permission.*

# “SC Read to Succeed”

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The law recognizes the important role that families play in helping their children develop into strong readers and writers. Schools are required to:

- regularly provide parents with written updates on their child’s progress in reading and writing;
- provide parents of children reading below grade level with specific information about the type of extra help their child will receive and the steps parents can take to support their child’s progress; and
- offer all parents information on how they can support their children’s development as readers and writers.

While Read to Succeed applies to grades pre-K through 12, special emphasis is placed on ensuring that every child is reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade. By this time, students must be able to transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Students who cannot read and understand grade level texts are likely to struggle academically going forward and are at greater risk of dropping out before graduation.

For this reason, Read to Succeed includes a 3rd grade retention requirement. Beginning this school year, 3rd graders who score at the lowest achievement level on the end-of year state reading assessment will not be promoted to 4th grade unless they qualify for a good cause exemption or demonstrate grade-level reading proficiency after completing a summer reading camp.

A good cause exemption may be available for students who have limited English proficiency, are disabled, or who have previously been retained. An exemption may also be available if a student can demonstrate the required level of reading proficiency using another approved method. Third graders who are at risk of being held back and who do not qualify for an exemption must be offered an opportunity to attend a summer reading camp. Students who successfully complete summer reading camp and show that they can read at the minimum required level can then be promoted to 4th grade.

SICs can play an important role in helping to ensure that all students are reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade and through high school graduation by raising parent awareness about:

- the importance of monitoring and understanding information they receive about their child’s progress and communicating with their child’s teacher(s) about that information;
- the extra help that struggling readers are entitled to under Read to Succeed;
- how parents can support their child’s literacy development outside of school time; and
- the third grade retention requirement and summer reading camps.



*photo credit: Third Grade Reading Task Force, convened by the Belk Foundation and designed and facilitated by the Lee Institute; <http://www.leeinstitute.org/programs-services/case-studies/third-grade-reading-task-force/>*

SICs can find additional information about suggested goals and activities related to Read to Succeed on the SC-SIC website at [sic.sc.gov](http://sic.sc.gov).

***Is your SIC working on a Read to Succeed or literacy activity? We would like to hear about your activities and results so that we can share that information with SICs around the state. Please send your stories to Karen Utter, Coordinator of Council Services at [utter@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:utter@mailbox.sc.edu).***

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## “From the Executive Director”

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we’ve been, where we are, and where we want to go if we are truly to make a difference. I believe that’s what we all want to do.

So we pledge to you our ongoing support, we invite your inquiries and suggestions, and we commit to you that SC-SIC will strive to do all that it can to help local School Improvement Councils in their valuable and very meaningful work. We can do it together.

And I personally wish for you and yours a happy holiday season and a wonderful and prosperous New Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Utter', written over a light blue horizontal line.



## ***“Three Join SC-SIC Board of Trustees”***

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teacher, summer school director, assistant principal, and principal. He currently serves as Chief Human Resources Officer for Orangeburg Consolidated School District 5.

He holds the BA degree in Communications/Journalism from the University of South Carolina-Spartanburg, and the Master of Education in Elementary Education and Education Specialist in Administration/Supervision degrees from Converse College. He is also a 2012 graduate of the SC Education Policy Fellowship Program (SC-EPFP), coordinated through the SC School Improvement Council.

Mr. Ivey is also a career educator and National Board Certified Teacher in the Sumter County Schools who currently serves as Principal of Willow Drive Elementary School. Previously an elementary lead science teacher, adult education teacher, middle level science and ProTeam teacher, and middle school assistant principal, he also served as an Adjunct Instructor at the University of South Carolina-Spartanburg.

He holds the AA degree in General Studies and BA degree in Elementary Education from the University of South Carolina, the Master of Education degree in Educational Technology from Lesley University (MA), the Master of Education degree in Education Policy and Management from Harvard University (MA), and the Education Specialist degree in Administration from South Carolina State University.

A Past Chairman and current Advisory Board Member of the Sumter Teacher Forum, Mr. Ivey was the 2013 Sumter County Schools Teacher of the Year, a 2014 White House Regional Fellows finalist, and a 2016 Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship National finalist. He is also a 2017 graduate of the SC Education Policy Fellowship Program.

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## ***“SC Education Policy Fellowship Program”***

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“This year’s SC-EPFP class is composed of some of the most talented and dedicated leaders in our state,” said Robert E. Barnett, Chief Operating Officer for the SC Chamber of Commerce and SC-EPFP Advisory Board Chair. “Through the program they will develop added insights, acquire new professional skills, make valuable connections, and work collaboratively to take proactive steps for South Carolina’s future through meaningful education improvement and reform.”

Fellows will meet monthly throughout the 2017-18 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 in the spring.

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 17 states and the District of Columbia.

Since its inception in South Carolina, SC-EPFP has produced over 150 program graduates from a variety of professional backgrounds.

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/Pages/SCEducationPolicyFellowshipProgram.aspx>.

