

SC-SIC Council News



"Civic Engagement at Work for Public Education"

Volume 40, Issue 1, 2019

Three Join SC-SIC Board of Trustees

Jessica Adamson of Rock Hill, Shannon Bedenbaugh of Hilton Head Island, and Stewart Cooner of West Columbia have joined the SC School Improvement Council Board of Trustees, Board Chair Dora Leonard has announced.

Mr. Cooner was elected to a three-year term as a representative of the state's Midlands region. Ms. Adamson and Ms. Bedenbaugh were appointed to fill the remainder of unexpired terms representing the Upper Central and Low-country regions, respectively.

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November 15 Reporting Deadline Fast Approaching!

Author Douglas Adams once said, "I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by." Well, you may hear that "whoosh" drawing closer! State laws governing School Improvement Councils require that all SIC membership data be updated by November 15 of each year. SIC District Contacts coordinate the reporting of SIC membership by assigning the responsibility to their schools' administrative offices or by entering SIC the data from the district office. In most cases, the school district directs the individual schools to report the information – this is done via the SC-SIC *Member Network*.

The SC-SIC *Member Network* is an online database and reporting system that registers School Improvement Council members, houses the *SIC Reports to the Parents*, and reports each Council's compliance with South Carolina law. The *Member Network* is unique to SC-SIC, documenting thousands of individuals devoted to advancing civic engagement in public education. It also has an available read-only view, where SIC membership, compliance, and *Reports to the Parents* can be accessed by the general public.



So, don't let your deadlines "whoosh" past you by surprise! Check the status of your SIC by using the read-only function of the *Member Network* – if your SIC hasn't been updated, please make arrangements to do so as soon as possible!

Message from the Executive Director

Tom F. Hudson



Fall is upon us and we are now beginning the headlong rush to the holiday season and an ensuing new year.

The late journalist/writer/filmmaker Nora Ephron looked at fall this way: “Don’t you love...the fall? It makes me want to buy school supplies. I would send you a bouquet of newly sharpened pencils if I knew your name and address.”

We’re now in the third month of the school year and I imagine a good number of those pencils have been worn down and re-sharpened at least a time or two. But I believe it’s still a good time to ask ourselves what “supplies” our School Improvement Councils have brought, and will bring, to the school communities they serve.

For some 42 years, South Carolina’s SICs have had the valuable opportunity – through their roles established in state statute – to bring together the voices, insights, and observation of parents, educators, community members, and students to make positive and lasting change for the schools that they serve.

There are almost innumerable ways for SICs to do this. One can look at the work of the SIC in their school community for examples. Or they can look at the stories of impact made by those SICs recognized through the SC School Improvement Council’s *Dick and Tunky Riley Award for SIC Excellence* – such stories can be found on SC-SIC’s [website](#) (in *Riley Award*-winner case statements or our online “SIC Activities Resource Library”). So, does your SIC have a great story to share about its efforts last school year? Apply for the annual *Riley Award* by December 6 (see related article in this issue of *Council News* for more details).

And local Councils can learn more about what their roles and responsibilities are in the school improvement process by attending an SC-SIC sponsored training in their school district. An [SIC training schedule](#) can be found on the SC-SIC site so that SIC members can plan to attend one near them. Don’t see one yet scheduled for your district? Contact your SIC District Contact to help get one scheduled (a list of these contacts is also provided on the site). SC-SIC provides training opportunities throughout the school year, and a series of three short “refresher” training videos on “SIC Basics” is available online as well.

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17 SC Leaders Named to Prestigious Ed Policy Program

SC-EPFP, coordinated through 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. The program is designed to equip them in working toward sound education policy and practice in South Carolina. SC-EPFP Fellows participate in a variety of activities to promote leadership, develop professional networks, demystify education policy, and foster greater understanding of the roles of government and the community in education.

Members of the SC-EPFP class for 2019-20 are:



Dr. Delia B. Allen, Research Associate, The Riley Institute at Furman University; Parker Morse Andreoli, Graduate Assistant, Clemson University College of Education; Michael C. Cates, School Board Trustee, District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties; Cassandra L. Davis, Principal, Mayo Elementary School, Spartanburg County School District Two; Betty Gardiner, Director of Grantmaking and Development, South Carolina First Steps; Andrew J. Hart, Chief Business Officer, East Point Academy Public Charter School, West Columbia; Jill Hulsen, Vice President of Operations and Programs, Charleston Promise Neighborhood; Dr. Ayesha A. Hunter, Principal, Bates Middle School, Sumter County Schools; Chanda F. Jefferson, 2020 SC Teacher of the Year, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement; Debbie Sanders Jones, Interim Executive Director, South Carolina Future Minds; Tara R. Jones-Martin, Senior Claims Analyst, SC School Boards Insurance Trust; Cathy A. Kovacs, Program Manager, Early Care and Education ABC Quality, SC

Department of Social Services; Dr. Brian Newsome, Principal, Gray Collegiate Academy Public Charter School, West Columbia; Dorothy M. Priester, Executive Director, Cherokee County First Steps; Julie I. Putnam, Coordinator for Web and Media Services, Kershaw County Schools; Austin T. Rhodes, President, Rhodes Branding, Columbia; and Dr. Ivory T. Thigpen, SC House of Representatives, District 79, Richland County.

“Once again this year, our SC-EPFP class includes a cross-section of the most talented and committed leaders we have in The Palmetto State,” said Scott T. Price, Executive Director for the SC School Boards Association and SC-EPFP Advisory Board Chair.

South Carolina 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 in the nation’s capital in March.

SC-EPFP operates under the auspices of the national Education Policy Fellowship Program of the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) in Washington, DC, which oversees Fellowship programs in 16 states and the District of Columbia. Tom F. Hudson, SC-SIC Executive Director, serves as the State Coordinator for SC-EPFP, assisted by Co-Coordinator Bruce Moseley, formerly Director of School Leadership with the SC Department Education.

Since its inception in South Carolina, SC-EPFP has produced nearly 220 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](#) on the SC-SIC website.

Carolina Family Engagement Center Begins Direct Work with Schools

The Carolina Family Engagement Center (CFEC), a five year, \$5 million dollar grant program of the U.S. Department of Education and housed in the UofSC College of Education and SC School Improvement Council office, has entered its second year of operation with direct service provision to five schools districts and 25 schools.



These include: Richland One (Midlands) – Burton Pack ES, Edward E. Taylor ES, Hyatt Park ES, Alcorn MS, Heyward Gibbes MS, and Eau Claire HS; Chester County School District (Upper Central) – Chester Park Center of Literacy through Technology, Chester Park School of Inquiry, Chester Park School of the Arts, Chester MS, and Chester HS; Rock Hill Schools (Upper Central) – Ebinport ES and W.C. Sullivan MS; Clarendon School District Two (Pee Dee) – Manning Early Childhood Center, Manning Primary School, Manning ES, Manning JHS, and Manning HS; and Anderson School District 2 (Upstate) – Marshall Primary School, Wright ES, Belton ES, Honea Path MS, Belton MS, and Belton Honea Path HS.

Four Regional Family Engagement Liaisons have been added to the CFEC staff to work directly with these districts and schools, as well as with selected classroom teachers/teams within eight schools in six additional districts: Jackson Creek ES, Polo Road ES, and Richland Northeast HS (Richland School District Two); James M. Brown ES (School District of Oconee County); Harleyville ES (Dorchester School District Four); Laurens ES (Laurens County School District 55); Sims MS (Union County Schools); and Paul Knox MS (Aiken County Public Schools).

Serving the Midlands region is Lead Liaison Laurann Gallitto, MMFT, with Julia Beatty, MSW/LISW-CP serving the Upper Central region, Ranina Outing, MHA in the Pee Dee, and Dr. Lorilei Swanson, LMFT/LPC serving the Upstate.

More about the Carolina Family Engagement Center staff and CFEC's work can be found [online](#), and followed on Facebook ([@CFECatUofSC](#)), Twitter ([@CarolinaFamily2](#)), and Instagram ([UofSCCFEC](#)).

Apply for the 2020 Riley Award for SIC Excellence

Did your School Improvement Council do some outstanding work during the 2018-19 school year? Has it undertaken projects and goals that have made an impact on the life of your school community? Then the SC-SIC *Dick and Tunko Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence* might have your name on it in 2020 – but only if you submit your award application by December 6!

The annual *Riley Award* process is designed to identify outstanding SICs across the state (at schools open for at least one year), share the good news about their work, and recognize the many great things SICs are doing for their school communities. Named for former U.S. Education Secretary and SC Governor Dick Riley and his late wife, Tunko, the *Riley Award* reflects the couple's commitment to education and support of parent/community involvement in South Carolina's schools.



The deadline for Level One applications for the 2020 *Riley Award* is fast approaching – 5:00 p.m., Friday, December 6, 2019. The *Award's* Level One application, suggestions, and application procedures are all available [online](#). Applications may be submitted by U.S. Mail, FedEx/UPS, delivered by hand, or scanned and emailed to the SC-SIC office as directed in the application materials by the deadline above.

Also available are the [submitted case statements of the previous five *Riley Award* recipients](#) so that you can get an idea of what these SICs accomplished and shared to garner themselves the distinction that the *Riley Award* provides.

In addition to the opportunity for your SIC to be recognized for outstanding work, the *Riley Award* judging panel (members of the SC-SIC State Board of Trustees) provides useful feedback on all applications reviewed – a great learning tool for SICs.

Questions regarding the application process may be directed to SC-SIC Associate Director Karen at utter@email.sc.edu or by calling the SC-SIC office, 1-800-868-2232.

So, apply for the 2020 *Riley Award for SIC Excellence* this year and give your SIC an opportunity to shine!

Strive to Engage Families of Diverse Cultures

Families who are reticent about coming to school because of their language skills and cultural differences need extra support from school system leadership.

Below are some tips to help families of diverse cultures better interact with their school:

- In the languages represented in the school, offer an ongoing orientation program for families on topics such as homework, school attendance, and school discipline policies.
- Find bilingual speakers to help bridge the gap between families and the school through translation services.
- Form a family-advisory group made up of people speaking all the languages represented in the school. The group should make recommendations on how to engage families authentically and improve services.
- Offer leadership training to families and encourage them to serve on decision-making committees and councils.
- Provide opportunities for cross-cultural discussions with students and their families to talk about their cultural differences as well as identify behaviors and traits shared among cultures.

Reprinted with permission from the copyrighted article “PR Tips for Principals,” published in the May 2019 issue of *PRincipal Communicator*, a publication of the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), and originally from the book, *The Politics of Authentic Engagement: Perspectives, Strategies and Tools for Student Success*, available for purchase in the NSPRA Online Store, www.nspr.org/products. No other reprints allowed without written permission from NSPRA, 15948 Derwood Road, Rockville, MD 20855; (301) 519-0496; www.nspr.org.

From the Executive Director

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You may have concluded by now that SC-SIC’s [website](#) is chock full of resources and materials to assist local SICs and their members, and it is. I encourage each of our nearly 14,000 SIC members across the state to visit it, click through it, and see the wealth of information it provides. I believe you’ll be glad that you did.

But perhaps SC-SIC’s greatest resource is its staff. SC-SIC Associate Director Karen Utter, Digital & Web Director Claudia Parnell, and I stand ready to do all we can to provide Council members and others with all the assistance and information we can to help you with your important work. Please don’t hesitate to contact us by phone or email and get to know us, as we like to know you.

So, together, let’s roll up our sleeves and re-sharpen our pencils this fall so that we can continue the very impactful work of our state’s School Improvement Councils. The late author Jim Bishop once wrote: “Autumn carries more gold in its pocket than all the other seasons.” That’s true – it’s a rich and beautiful time of year. What “gold” do we have in our pockets, in terms of time, talent, and treasure, that we can collectively invest in the work of SICs? We each have some. By pooling these resources together, who knows what limit of good we can do?

The success of our schools and students calls for such an investment. And I am grateful for our SIC members, from the Upstate to the Lowcountry, who have so much to give. Thank you for your commitment and dedication, and for your very valuable service to our state’s SICs.



Three Join SC-SIC Board

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“These three individuals have a great commitment to public education and its vital connection to the future of South Carolina,” said Ms. Leonard. “We are indeed fortunate to have access to their experience and insights on the Board as we assist the SC School Improvement Council in providing needed support and services to local SICs and the schools and students they serve.”

The SC-SIC Board of Trustees is composed of 17 members from all corners of South Carolina and acts in an advisory capacity to the SC School Improvement Council, which serves nearly 14,000 members of local SICs in the state’s 1,100-plus K-12 public schools.



Jessica Adamson

Ms. Adamson is a public school parent and past Chair of the Ebinport Elementary SIC in Rock Hill Schools (York Three), which received SC-SIC’s *Dick and Tunky Riley Award for SIC Excellence* in 2016. She is CEO of Aperture Education, LLC in Charlotte, NC, and is a 2019 graduate of the SC Education Policy Fellowship Program (SC-EPFP). A member of the Social & Emotional Learning Providers Council Coordinating Committee, she holds the BA degree in Classics from the University of South Carolina.

Ms. Bedenbaugh is also a public school parent and is past Chair of the Hilton Head Island Middle SIC in the Beaufort County School District, which was the 2019 recipient of the *Riley Award for SIC Excellence*. She currently serves as an elected parent member of the SICs of Hilton Head Island Elementary and Hilton Head High. She is a co-founder of Circle 4 Success, a community organization which provides material assistance to students, families, and others who may struggle with homelessness, loss of a parent, illness, or financial crisis. Formerly working in the insurance and claims industry, she holds the BA degree from the University of South Carolina.



Shannon Bedenbaugh



Stewart Cooner

Also a public school parent, Mr. Cooner is past SIC Chair for Northside Middle and Pineview Elementary, both in Lexington School District Two. He serves as a member and Vice Chair of the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School in West Columbia, to which he was elected by the SC General Assembly in 2005. He is Director of Telepsychiatry for the SC Department of Mental Health and holds the BS degree and MHA degree from the University of South Carolina.

SC School Improvement Council Annual Meeting

April 4, 2020

Watch your email and the [SC-SIC website](#) for details!

