

Council News

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Aiken County Superintendent King Laurence Named SIC Advocate of the Year for 2022



King Laurence, Superintendent of the Aiken County Public School District, was named the 2022 SIC Advocate of the Year in an online awards ceremony hosted April 30 by the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC).

The SIC Advocate of the Year Award recognizes exemplary efforts on behalf of School Improvement Councils across South Carolina by individuals and others actively

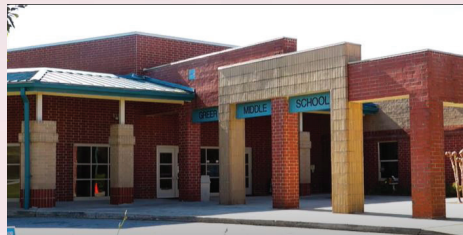
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Greer Middle School Improvement Council Named Winner of 2022 Riley Award for SIC Excellence

The Greer Middle School Improvement Council (Greenville County Schools) has been named the recipient of the 2022 Dick and Tunky Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence.

The award was announced in a virtual awards ceremony held on April 30 by the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC). The ceremony was recorded and is available for viewing at <https://sic.sc.gov>.



The annual Riley Award for SIC Excellence was created in 2002 to highlight the significant contributions made to public education by the nearly 12,000 School Improvement Council members who volunteer in every public school in the state. The award is named in honor of the former SC Governor and U.S. Secretary of Education and his late wife, recognizing the couple's longstanding commitment to quality public education.

"The Greer Middle School Improvement Council has done excellent work deserving of this statewide honor," said SC-SIC Board of Trustees Chair Robert "Bob" Grant. "The invaluable efforts of our SICs make positive and lasting change for our schools, students, families, and communities. The Greer Middle SIC is a splendid example of such impactful work."

Presented with Honorable Mentions for their work last school year were: Bookman Road Elementary SIC and Joseph Keels Elementary SIC (Richland School District Two); Leavelle McCampbell Middle SIC (Aiken County Public School District); and Millwood Elementary SIC (Sumter School District).

From the Executive Director

Tom F. Hudson



Before I touch on some SIC-related items in this space, I cannot let the opportunity pass to share that my heart goes out to the families, educators, students, first responders, and community of Robb Elementary School in Texas as they attempt to come to grips with the tragedy that stole 19 innocent lives from them last month.

Once again, the specter of senseless violence has darkened the doorway of yet another American school. It is my fervent hope – and I believe that of many – that those who have influence can come to some meeting of minds and take bold and proactive steps so that no other child, parent, or teacher shall have to face or fear such carnage in yet another U.S. classroom.

As we in South Carolina wrap up another school year and look to the blazing days of summer, SC-SIC encourages local Councils to begin looking toward the upcoming school year. It will be upon us before we know it, and it will be a year very much different than the previous two. As we strive to put the pandemic behind us, we will have to intentionally focus on how to come back together again as SICs and school communities.

What goals do your SIC wish to set for 2022-23? Are there any SIC goals carried over from previous years? How about your strategies – do they need adjustment based on reviewed results? How did these efforts tie into the school's Five-Year Plan? Asking these questions now can help SICs be better prepared to jump on in as soon as the school bell tolls in August.

Now is also the time for local SICs – working with their district's SIC District Contact – to plan for training their 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 in-person district-wide sessions as well as virtual sessions to help local members with their SIC work. SIC Chairs and/or Principals can reach out to their District Contact to arrange such training and can check the statewide training schedule posted on the [SC-SIC website](#).

Thank you for all your SIC work and commitment over these last two particularly challenging school years. We look forward to working along with you again for 2022-23. Local SICs do valuable things for their schools and students every year – and SC-SIC is proud to help in those efforts.



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About the Cover Photo

The Torchbearer statue, donated to the University by the artist, Anna Hyatt Huntington. The statue is located in front of Wardlaw College.

Saxe Gotha Elementary SIC Recognized for Annual Report to the Parents Excellence

The School Improvement Council (SIC) of Saxe Gotha Elementary School (Lexington County School District One) has been named the recipient of SC-SIC's fifth annual Award of Merit for *SIC Report to the Parents Excellence*.

The 2022 award was announced during an online awards ceremony held April 30.

State statute requires that each SIC in South Carolina prepare and disseminate a *Report to the Parents* each spring to inform their school communities of the school's and SIC's work and progress toward established improvement goals.

"This award is intended to recognize *Report* content, clarity, and design appeal, as well as to stress the importance of the *SIC Report to the Parents* to our school communities," said SC-SIC Executive Director Tom F. Hudson. "We congratulate the Saxe Gotha Elementary SIC on its outstanding efforts to fulfill this required aspect of state law."

In recent years, School Improvement Councils have been asked to not only produce these *Reports* for their local communities but to also post them electronically as part of their accountability process to SC-SIC's online *Member Network*. There, *Reports* are readily available to anyone wishing to read more about their school's and SIC's improvement efforts.

SC-SIC staff and state Board of Trustees members review all *SIC Reports to the Parents* posted to the *Member Network* and through discussion and consensus determine an annual award recipient.



SC-EPFP to Begin Accepting Applications for 2022-23 in June

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 – will begin accepting applications in June through mid-August for the 2022-23 academic year.

SC-EPFP operates under the auspices of the national Education Policy Fellowship Program of the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) in Washington, DC (www.iel.org), which oversees Fellowship programs offered through state sites and the District of Columbia. In South Carolina the program is coordinated by the SC School Improvement Council, located in the UofSC College of Education.

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

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 [visit SC-EPFP on the web](#).

Attention SC-SIC Member Network Users!

SC-SIC *Member Network* Users are reminded that all accounts and passwords will be reset on July 1. Following that date, designated users will have to reactivate or apply for a user account and new password to update their SIC's member information for the 2022-23 school year. Visit the SC-SIC [Member Network](#) online for more information or call the SC-SIC office at 1-800-868-2232 for assistance.



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 2025, 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, current SIC members, school board members, former legislators, and more), and the Board strives to maintain its diversity. This year, the Board is specifically seeking representatives from the Upstate, Lowcountry, and Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) regions of the state.

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. Send a resume and letter of interest to SC-SIC Executive Director Tom F. Hudson at hudson tf@mailbox.sc.edu, by Thursday, June 30, 2022.

More information on the SC-SIC Board of Trustees can be found on the [SC-SIC website](#).

SC School Improvement Council Members Featured in Publication

Seven South Carolinians who volunteer to help public schools are featured in a new publication from the Carolina Family Engagement Center (CFEC) and the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC).

In "Accepting the Challenge: Stakeholder Stories," writer Aida Rogers interviews community members and CFEC staffers who serve on School Improvement Councils in Columbia, Manning, and Rock Hill. They discuss the rewards and difficulties of trying to help schools with the myriad issues they face, including literacy, attendance, teacher-parent communication, mental health, family difficulties, and problems from the pandemic.

"Whether members are concerned primary caretakers, employees of local businesses and non-profits, or educators themselves, these volunteer advisory groups are often the quiet engine humming in the background, making sure schools meet their goals," Rogers writes in the introduction to the interviews.

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supporting and promoting the work of SICs within their spheres of influence. Previous recipients of this Award have included principals and principal/SIC chair teams, SIC District Contacts, school board members, state education leaders, legislators, and others.

“The SC School Improvement Council is most grateful for Superintendent Laurence’s long-time and unwavering commitment to the principles and practices of SICs,” said SC-SIC Executive Director Tom F. Hudson. “As SICs begin their 45th year of serving South Carolina schools and students, it’s particularly fitting that we honor an individual who has been ‘in on’ SICs from the very beginning.”

Hudson stated that Superintendent Laurence was an elected student member of his high school’s first SIC 45 years ago. Over the years and throughout his career as an educator, he has served on and worked with SICs as a teacher member, parent member, assistant principal, principal, district-level administrator, and now in his capacity as superintendent.

“Before becoming interim and then superintendent of his district in 2019, he served for a number of years as the SIC District Contact for the Aiken County Public School District,” said Hudson. “Currently in his first term as a member of the SC-SIC Board of Trustees, it has been a distinct pleasure to work with Superintendent Laurence through the years and to see firsthand his support and commitment to the work of our state’s School Improvement Councils.”

SIC Members Featured

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There are 1,100-plus SICs in South Carolina with over 12,000 local SIC members. They have existed in the state since 1977.

“The impact of our state’s local School Improvement Councils cannot be stressed strongly enough,” said Tom F. Hudson, SC-SIC Executive Director. “When parents, community members, educators, students, and others come together to work on a shared vision, our schools benefit tremendously.

“School and district staff cannot be expected do this alone – all stakeholders have a role and responsibility in strengthening our schools. And stronger schools mean stronger communities.”

“Accepting the Challenge” is part of a larger effort to raise everyone’s awareness of the important role community members can play to support education in our state, CFEC Project Director Karen Utter said. “We hope that, by sharing these stories, more community members will be inspired to roll up their sleeves and get to work on behalf of South Carolina’s children and schools.”

Featured in the publication are:

- Christopher Fleming, a member of the Eau Claire High School SIC in Columbia
- Elizabeth Ann Geddings, vice-chair of the Manning Primary School SIC
- Jessica Morton, member of the Ebinport Elementary School SIC in Rock Hill
- Ranina Outing, CFEC Pee Dee regional liaison, who attends SIC meetings in Manning
- Laurann Patel, CFEC Midlands regional liaison, who attends Eau Claire High SIC meetings
- Barbara Tiller, co-chair of Arden Elementary and Eau Claire High school SICs, and chair of Heyward Gibbes Middle School SIC
- Sharon P. Williams, member and chair of the Manning Early Childhood Center SIC

The publication can be viewed here: <https://cfec.sc.gov/sites/cfec/files/Documents/SIC%20Stories.pdf>.

The Carolina Family Engagement Center is a federal grant project housed within SC-SIC at the University of South Carolina College of Education, funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). CFEC’s work focuses primarily on underserved families and their students (low-income, English learners, those with disabilities, those in foster care, migrants, homeless and marginalized communities). CFEC makes its tools, trainings, and materials available to all stakeholders statewide through its website, <https://cfec.sc.gov>, and other venues.

SICs Honored by SC House of Representatives



South Carolina's School Improvement Councils were recently honored by the state House of Representatives with a resolution recognizing their 45 years of service to the schools, students, and families of The Palmetto State. The resolution was sponsored State Representative Sylleste Davis (R-Berkeley), a former member and chair of the SC-SIC Board of Trustees. On hand for the presentation of the resolution were current and former members of the SC-SIC Board and staff (L to R, back row): current SC-SIC Board member Stewart Cooner; SC-SIC Associate Director Karen Utter. (L to R, front row): former SC-SIC Board member Dr. Virginia Alston Brown; former SC-SIC Board Chair Amelia McKie; current Board Chair Bob Grant; Representative Davis; SC-SIC Executive Director Tom F. Hudson; former SC-SIC Executive Director Cassie Barber; and former SC-SIC Board member and 2020 SIC Advocate of the Year Dr. Luanne Kokolis.

