Slide 1:

Carolina Family Engagement Center
Equity, Opportunity & Excellence in Education

South Carolina SIC School Improvement Council

Convening Your SIC

It's More Important Than Ever!

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Slide 2:

How Has the Pandemic Impacted Your Views on Family Engagement?

?

Less Important ☐   About the Same ☐   More Important ☐

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Slide 3:

It's More Important Than Ever to Include Parents in Decision-Making

Create opportunities for parents to share information

Collaborate with parents in planning and problem-solving

Leads to better results!

Family-School-Community Alliance (August 2020) *Ensuring Family Voice in Return to School Plans* (https://fscalliance.org)

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Slide 4:

Your SIC Can Help You Maintain An Ongoing Conversation

SIC's are required, established stakeholder advisory councils that can:

- provide you with input and feedback on a regular basis.
- facilitate two-way communication with the broader school community.
- connect their schools with needed community resources.

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Slide 5:

Part One: Getting Organized

SIC Elections and Appointments

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Slide 6:

SICs can function even during social distancing.

- You can still hold parent, teacher, and student (high school) elections using electronic/low tech methods.
- You can still appoint community members by email or phone.
- Ex-Officio members can be notified by email, text, or phone.
- SICs can hold virtual (and/or phone) meetings monthly.

You may find that virtual elections/meetings attract more participants!

You *Can* Convene Your SIC This Year!

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Types of SIC Members

Elected	Appointed	Ex-Officio
☐ Parents	☐ Community Member	☐ Principal
☐ Teachers		
☐ Students (Grades 9-12)		☐ Other leaders such as PTA/PTO rep, Teacher of the Year, Parent Liaison, Past SIC Chair
All serve staggered 2-year terms	*SIC determines term in bylaws*	*SIC names in bylaws*

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Minimum SIC Size

Elementary and Middle Schools

Elected		Appointed	Ex-Officio
Parents	Teachers	Community Members	Principal

High Schools (Grade 9 and above)

Elected			Appointed	Ex-Officio
Parents	Teachers	Students	Community Members	Principal

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Bigger Isn't Necessarily Better

- Your SIC should reflect the size and diversity of the school, but not be so big that it becomes unwieldy or unmanageable.
- You don't have to be a "member" to participate in SIC. Everyone can attend meetings, serve on committees, or help with SIC initiatives.
- **START SMALL AND SET A REALISTIC MEMBERSHIP GOAL**

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SIC Elections

By law, SIC elections must be held <u>annually</u> and completed by <u>October 15</u>

Use any method that is
- Fair
- Encourages high levels of participation, especially for parents

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How Will SIC Elections Look Different This Year?

Parents Elect Parents — Can't hold in-person at large parent events. Online tools available, but they need to include option for families without internet.

Teachers Elect Teachers — Teachers can still hold nominations and elections in virtual all-faculty meetings.

Students Elect Students — Can combine with virtual Student Council elections or hold a separate virtual election.

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Holding SIC Parent Elections Within Limits of Social Distancing

NOMINATIONS

Give ample notice of how and when nominations can be made. Use a mix of methods that together reach all families.

- Examples: school website, email, text, electronically-generated calls, school marquee, newsletter, social media, posted or mailed flyers, post cards, etc.
- Nomination notice should state:
  - Who is eligible to be nominated and who can submit a nomination.
  - How to submit a nomination and when the nominations period closes.
  - A few sentences about SIC and what parent representatives do.

Spread the word and make it easy to respond.

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Holding SIC Parent Elections Within Limits of Social Distancing
ELECTIONS

Give ample notice of elections as well as nominations.

- Notice should state when and how parents will receive/can access a ballot, how to submit their vote, and the voting deadline.
- If available, provide a list of candidates with a bio for each.
- Like nominations, use a mix of methods to reach all families.

Use of electronic survey tools like Survey Monkey, Qualtrics, or Google Forms (check with your district) to conduct balloting; provide option for those without internet access.

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Helpful Tips for Parent Elections

01 SIC Elections Toolkit at *sic.sc.gov* has helpful ideas and templates

02 Seek help from current SIC members who aren't running this year.

03 If you don't have nominees, extend the deadline for nominations. Do more outreach.

04 Hold an election regardless of number of candidates running. Add space for write-ins.

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1. Notify all candidates of the results individually before announcing publicly.
2. Thank unsuccessful candidates for their participation. Let them know they are still needed and welcome to participate in SIC meetings and committees.
3. Let school community know the results.
4. Save election records and ballot counts for at least several years.

After Elections Are Over

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Elections are Over and We Still Don't Have Any Parent Members!

Convene — Convene your SIC with the members that you have from your school and community.

Assess — Assess **why** you haven't found two parents to serve on your SIC – make a plan of action to address the cause(s). Don't assume you know. ASK PARENTS!

Set a Goal — Set a goal and make a plan to identify two parent members.

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SIC community members are appointed by the principal.

Look for individuals who aren't parents or employed by the district or school who can:

Bring in resources and/or expertise

Link school with families not yet engaged

Build support for school within whole community

SIC Appointments

See SIC Handbook for suggestions @ sic.sc.gov

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We Can't Find Community Members to Serve on Our SIC!

Libraries	Faith-based organizations
Military and law enforcement	Non-profit service providers
Local business owners/partners	Local physicians
Marketing and communications firms	Retiree associations
Economic and community development organizations	City and county recreation departments
Health care providers	Civic and cultural organizations
Local social service agencies	Nearby colleges and universities, technical colleges, or trade schools
Law and other professional firms	Real estate agencies

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Infuse Equity Into Every Step of Organizing Your SIC

Nominations and Elections:
- Share information broadly – use trusted brokers
- Intensify efforts to reach under-represented families
- Use multiple methods to reach out to all families

Appointments and Ex-Officio Positions:
- Utilize these to broaden representation on SIC

Pay Special Attention to:
- Low income and homeless families
- Racial and ethnic minorities in your community
- Families of students with disabilities
- Foster families
- ESL families

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Report Your SIC's Membership to the online SC-SIC Member Network

Deadline is November 15 every year

- Public can see if your SIC is reported and in compliance.
- School community can see who is representing them on the SIC.
- It's *IMPORTANT* to include correct email addresses and contact info for your SIC members.
- Access the SC-SIC Member Network online at sic.sc.gov.
- Contact SC-SIC 1-800-868-2232 or sic@mailbox.sc.edu for help.

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Part Two: Convening Your SIC

SIC Meetings during the Pandemic

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SIC Meeting Options During the Pandemic

Virtual Options:
- Online meeting platforms such as Zoom, Teams, Go To Meeting etc. – whatever is available through your district and school.
- Make hot spot or phone options available for members without Internet access.
- Share/post info on how members of the public can attend virtually attend SIC meetings where you post your SIC meeting schedule.
- If possible, provide a number to call or text for tech help during the meeting.

Other Options:
- Low-tech telephone conference calls can also work. Be sure to provide public access to these calls as well.

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Convening Your First Meeting

Set a date and time
- Principal and returning SIC Chair coordinate
- Try using a Doodle poll to set a date/time
- Consider scheduling needs of parent/community representatives as well as school personnel

Notify all new and returning members
- Make individual calls as well as sending an email.
- Post public notice of the meeting as soon as possible.
- Post a copy of the agenda at least 24 hours in advance.

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Elect Officers	Chair or Co-Chairs Vice-Chair Secretary
Create Meeting Schedule	At least 8 meetings per year Consider needs of all members when selecting days and times Post on website/entrance to school office
Distribute Materials	SIC Handbook Current SIC Bylaws School Improvement Plan

Agenda Items - First Meeting

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Chair and Principal prepare and post agenda 24 hours in advance of meeting.
• *Distribute agenda and minutes of last meeting in advance via email, text, fax, regular mail, etc.*
Approve minutes from prior meeting; take minutes of current meeting
• *Agenda and meeting minutes are public documents within the meaning of SC FOIA and must be maintained.*
A quorum is required to take any official SIC action.
Chair leads meeting

Normal Procedures for SIC Meetings Still Apply

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SICs are Here for the Long Haul

The impacts of COVID-19 will be with us even after social distancing is no long required.

It's critical that schools continue to collaborate with families over the long term to address academic and social emotional needs resulting from extended school closures.

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Part Three: Where to Go for Help

Services Available through SC-SIC

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SC-SIC is Here to Help

• **Website (*sic.sc.gov*) with free downloadable materials, resources, and information**
• Electronic newsletter (*Council News*) for SIC members
• **Periodic video updates (*SIC180*) touching on SIC related topics**
• Social Media – Facebook and Twitter
• **Variety of training opportunities**
• Technical assistance via telephone and email
• **Resources of the Carolina Family Engagement Center (CFEC)**

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Contact Information

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On the web at *sic.sc.gov* and *cfec.sc.gov*

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Appendix: Examples of Free Online Survey Resources

There are a number of free sites survey options available on the internet, several of which are listed below. SC-SIC has not vetted and does not endorse or recommend any particular site or service. It is up to your school to review and vet these options with the help of your IT specialists.

Crowd Signal https://crowdsignal.com/
-Free account, allows unlimited surveys, unlimited number of questions, and unlimited number of responses.
Google Forms
-Allows unlimited surveys, unlimited number of questions, and unlimited number of responses
Survey Legend
-Free account, limit of 3 surveys
Survey Nuts https://surveynuts.com/en/pricing
-Free account max of 100 responses per survey, max of 10 questions per survey
Survey Planet https://surveyplanet.com/
-Free account, allows unlimited surveys, unlimited number of questions, and unlimited number of responses
-20 language options
Survey Hero https://www.surveyhero.com/create-survey?ref=main-menu
-Basic account, allows unlimited surveys, unlimited number of questions, and unlimited number of responses

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