

## Help say "Goodbye" to South Carolina's "Minimally Adequate" Education

A new movement has been started to help South Carolina's public school system provide a "high quality education" for all of its students. This campaign, called Goodbye Minimally Adequate, hopes to change the state constitution so that some real progress can be made for the standards of public education.



See the SC-SIC Board resolution on this amendment, Page 3

For the last 15 years, 36 public school districts in the state of South Carolina have been locked in a lawsuit against the state (*Abbeville vs. South Carolina*) for the resources that they need to provide their students with an adequate education.

Many of these rural schools in South do not have the basic funding needed to provide their students with an effective learning environment. Teachers in these schools are often forced to teach in classrooms that lack the safe, sanitary, and basic teaching equipment they require.

Presently, South Carolina's standard for public education is only "a minimally adequate education," defined by the South Carolina Supreme Court in 1999 as "one that produces students who can read, write and do basic mathematical calculations."

The *Abbeville* case is now before the S.C. Supreme Court and a decision is expected the fall of this year.

Nonetheless, all of South Carolina's public schools - rural, urban, and suburban - can benefit from a change to a "high quality" standard written into our

state constitution. Supporters of South Carolina's public schools have launched the "Goodbye Minimally Adequate" campaign in hopes to changing the language in the state constitution from "minimally adequate" to "high quality education".

You can help them achieve their goal of 1,000,000 signatures for the 2010 election year by signing the petition found at [www.GoodbyeMinimallyAdequate.com](http://www.GoodbyeMinimallyAdequate.com) and encouraging others to join you.

Here are several arguments in favor of the constitutional amendment for high quality education:

- It will create a higher standard of expectations for public education for everyone: legislators, the public at large, the education community, and parents and students.
- It will set a higher marker for funding debates in the future which a minimally adequate system never will.
- It will send a message to those considering the profession that they will be entering a system that both offers them a professional experience that asks them to give their best and one that will situate them in teaching environments that promote excellence, not mediocrity.

A high quality education system represents the highest values of South Carolinians, formally stating that we can and will provide a public education system that will be better than minimally adequate.

See [www.GoodbyeMinimallyAdequate.com](http://www.GoodbyeMinimallyAdequate.com) for more information.

## Application Deadline Approaching for Riley School Improvement Award

The application deadline for the 2009 Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award is approaching and all of the state's SICs are encouraged to submit their Level 1 materials by **Monday, November 17<sup>th</sup>**.

A legendary couple in the Palmetto State, former U.S. Secretary of Education and South Carolina Governor Dick Riley and his late wife, Tunky, were honored in 2002 by the SC-SIC Board of Trustees with the creation of this named award which is presented each year to a School Improvement Council that demonstrates - in the spirit of the Rileys - exemplary leadership and action resulting in improved public education in their community. All SICs in South Carolina that have been convened for at least one year are eligible to apply.

The awards process has three levels. In **Level One**, SICs tell the story of their accomplishments in the *previous school year* through a written Case Statement.

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**Message from . . .  
the Executive Director  
Cassie Barber, M.A.**

**Navigating Curves in the Road**

Fall is in the air as I write this message. The heat of late summer usually accompanies the delivery of this newsletter, but circumstances have dictated that it arrive a bit later than usual.

I became director of SC School Improvement Council on July 1, 2007. My first day on the job greeted me with a flood, the product of hard rain and a drainage system blocked by overgrown tree roots. Due to scheduling conflicts, damage to the walls of our basement offices was not repaired until the following June. The refreshed walls gave us all a lift and made our offices look bright and professional.

Then came the flood of July 2008! A principal water main connected to the air conditioning system burst in the early morning hours of Sunday, the 20th, and approximately six inches of water accumulated throughout the basement level before the line failure was detected. Our entire staff has been working from home with limited access to our files and equipment for more than two months. SC-SIC lost equipment, furniture, and printed materials including handbooks and brochures.

We expect to be back in our College of Education home very soon and we have worked hard to continue delivering services and resources to you - though they may be slightly delayed. New, updated handbooks will be shipped directly to district offices in October and in the meantime we are sending out those handbooks that were not damaged on an as-needed basis. Don't worry if your handbook is the third edition; the only significant changes in the fourth edition are the use of the descriptor "At Risk" replacing the former label "Unsatisfactory" for those schools that scored poorly on their State Report Card, new information on the SC-SIC Member Network, and some wordsmithing here and there.

The SC-SIC Member Network is the online data collection system initiated by our office last year. The system ensures that all of your SIC membership information is captured so you can connect with each other and receive information like this newsletter from our office. The system also generates a report that tells you if the membership composition of your SIC is in compliance with state law. You can visit the Member Network on our website <http://sic.sc.gov> and access the system in a read-only function to see a listing of who serves on your council and others in your district and view their contact information. Security is a high priority and only school and district personnel can download or change this information.

Training remains a top priority for our staff. Be sure to visit the SC-SIC website regularly to view the list of trainings our staff is conducting across the state. SIC members are welcome to attend ANY SC-SIC led training no matter where it is held. We also have a new page on the site promoting SIC

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## A RESOLUTION

**Whereas**, the State of South Carolina has for the last three decades legislatively mandated the ongoing and active existence of School Improvement Councils in each of our state’s K-12 public schools; and

**Whereas**, it is the mission of the South Carolina School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) and its Board of Trustees “to promote and support civic engagement for quality public education in South Carolina;” and

**Whereas**, the SC-SIC Board of Trustees believes that it is a fundamental responsibility of the South Carolina General Assembly to provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free public schools to prepare our state’s children for a future of promise; and

**Whereas**, the SC-SIC Board of Trustees also believes that it is imperative that such a system of free public schools must foster a variety of superior learning programs so that each of our children is effectively afforded the opportunity to achieve in a rapidly changing world; and

**Whereas**, the SC-SIC Board of Trustees further believes that the words “minimally adequate” should not be deemed as acceptable to either describe or define our state’s commitment to public education, to public education equity or to public education funding.

**Therefore**, be it hereby resolved that the SC-SIC Board of Trustees supports an amendment of Section 3, Article XI of the Constitution of South Carolina to read:

*“The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free public schools open to all children in the State and shall establish, organize, and support such other public institutions of learning, as may be desirable that will provide a high quality education, allowing all students to reach their highest potential.”*

Approved this **12<sup>th</sup>** day of **September, 2008**, by the South Carolina School Improvement Council Board of Trustees, assembled at Columbia, South Carolina, and in testament thereof the signatures of the Board’s Chair and Vice Chair are hereto affixed.

Jeff Nicholson, Chair, SC-SIC Board of Trustees

Carlos Primus, Vice Chair, SC-SIC Board of Trustees

## "Riley Award Deadline Approaching"

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Level One applications count for 65 points. SICs scoring at least 55 points at this level will be entered on the SIC Honor Roll and will receive a certificate of achievement.

Up to 20 of the Honor Roll SICs will be chosen as semi-finalists to compete in **Level Two**, which demonstrates that a council is in compliance with state law. This level is worth 35 points and includes the opportunity to earn an additional 10 bonus points.



Bookman Road Elementary School SIC members, winners of the 2008 Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award, pose with Sen. Joel Lourie. Pictured are (left to right): Assistant Principal Kendra James; Bookman SIC Chair Tanya Rodriguez-Hodges; Senator Lourie; and Principal Michael Guliano.

Five of the semi-finalists will be chosen for the **Winners Level**. An independent panel of judges will evaluate the five finalists and choose the Riley Award winning SIC, which will receive a special trophy. The remaining finalists will receive Honorable Mention awards and engraved plaques.

Participating in this awards process is an opportunity for SICs to celebrate their achievements, share strategies with other councils, ensure their compliance with state law, and provide much deserved recognition for hard-working volunteers.

This year's award timeline is:

- **Level One applications** must be *received* in the SC-SIC office by 5:00 p.m. on **Monday, November 17, 2008**.
- SC-SIC will announce Honor Roll members and notify semi-finalists for **Level Two** on or before **Monday, January 12, 2009**.
- **Notebooks and Bonus material** from semi-finalists for **Level Two** must be *received* in the SC-SIC office by 5:00 p.m. on **Monday, February 2, 2009**.
- Five finalists will be notified on or before **Monday, February 23, 2009**.
- The winner of the Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award will be announced during a special awards event **on a date to be announced**.

Application materials, information and background on previous Riley Award winners are available on the SC-SIC website, <http://sic.sc.gov>. Completed applications should be sent by U.S. Mail or hand delivered to the SC-SIC, USC College of Education, Wardlaw Building Suite 001, 820 Main Street, Columbia, SC 29208. Emailed or faxed applications cannot be accepted.

For additional information, applicants can contact Tom Hudson, SC-SIC Director of Program Services, at 803-777-7658, toll-free at 1-800-868-2232, or by email at [hudsonf@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:hudsonf@mailbox.sc.edu).

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## Six new members join SC-SIC Board of Trustees

Jeff Nicholson, Chair of the SC-SIC Board of Trustees, recently announced that Mark A. Bounds of Columbia, Kenneth G. "Ken" Clark of Swansea, Brian R. Hann of Camden, Elizabeth "Liz" Michael of Columbia, Sherri L. Smith of Greenwood, and Fred S. Washington, Jr. of Beaufort, have joined the South Carolina School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) Board of Trustees.

Hann was appointed by Chairman Nicholson to fill an unexpired term. Bounds, Clark, Michael, Smith, and Washington were elected by the Board's membership to full three-year terms on the Board, which is composed of 21 members from across the state and acts in an advisory capacity to the SC-SIC.

"We are very fortunate to have such an outstanding group of new Board members who are so dedicated to the improvement of public education in our state," said Nicholson. "We welcome them and look forward to their insight and contributions to the Board, the SC-SIC and to the educational future of our state's children."

Mark A. Bounds is the current Deputy Superintendent for Educator Quality and Leadership with the S.C. Department of Education. Bounds has held numerous leadership positions over the last eight years, including serving as the SDE Director of the Office of School Leadership and as Executive Director of Communities in Schools of South Carolina. Bounds is retired from the U.S. Army with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He holds the Master of Science degree in Administration from Central Michigan University, the Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Navy College of Command and Staff, and the Bachelor of Science in Physical Education from Towson University.

Kenneth G. "Ken" Clark is a former member of the South Carolina General Assembly, representing House District 96 (Lexington/Aiken) and having served on the House Education and Public Works Committee and the House K-12 Education Subcommittee. He is currently President/CEO of Christ Central Institute in Wagener, SC. Clark is retired from the U.S. Navy with rank of Captain and has served in numerous leadership and management positions in the public and private sectors in the field of information and computer systems. He

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## "Message from the Executive Director"

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trainings conducted by district staff so be sure to take a look at that too. If your school was rated as "At Risk" on the state School Report Card, you'll be receiving direct assistance from one of our Council Specialists.

Like our schools, state agencies, and many businesses and homes, SC-SIC is facing serious budget concerns. Our budget has already been significantly reduced for this fiscal year and the threat of additional cuts is very real. Because of these budget constraints we are taking action to reduce paper and mail costs and make our travel dollars go further. Unfortunately, the Annual SIC Conference may fall victim to budget cuts. Our office has always subsidized the conference in order to keep costs low for SIC members and we may not be able to do so this year. Our Board of Trustees is working with staff to raise funds for the conference and we'll keep you posted on our progress.

In spite of the many challenges we face this year, SC-SIC continues to provide high quality services for you. Our website is chock full of information you can use every day and the Member Network will keep everyone connected. Our professional help is only a phone call or an email away and we are hearing from many of you. Each week we see more evidence that people are interested and excited about being a part of the SIC. We are helping you solve problems, brainstorm new ideas, and organize for action. Members of the SC-SC Board of Trustees are working hard to bring additional resources to the state office and fostering engagement and excitement in their home districts. So in spite of being thrown a few curves, we're going to have a great year!

*Cassie*



## " SC-SIC Welcomes New Board Members"

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holds the Masters of Public Administration degree in Computer Systems/Management Information Systems from American University, and the Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the United States Naval Academy.

Brian R. Hann has been the School Improvement Council Chair for Camden Elementary School for the Arts in Kershaw County. This SIC's outstanding efforts last year led to it being named as a finalist for the SC-SIC's 2008 Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award. Hann is Occupational and Safety Risk Manager with the University of South Carolina Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management. He holds the designations of Certified Industrial Hygienist, Certified Safety Professional and Associate in Risk Management. Hann also holds the Master of Public Health degree in Environmental Health Science/Industrial Hygiene from the University of South Carolina and the Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science/Community Health from the State University of New York at Cortland.

Elizabeth "Liz" Michael is currently Organizational Development Specialist with SCANA Services, Inc. She previously served as Educational Policy Analyst and Program Director of *South Carolina Business Week* magazine with the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce. Her professional background also includes the positions of Director of Training for National Mentor, Inc., and Associate Director for the Mental Health Association of South Carolina. She currently serves as a gubernatorial appointee to the Advisory Committee on Child Care Regulations. Michael holds the Master of Social Work degree and the Bachelor of Arts degree in Experimental Psychology, both from the University of South Carolina.

Sherri L. Smith is District Coordinator for K-12 Curriculum and Instruction for the Abbeville County School District. A 24-year career educator, she has served in the elementary school classroom teaching Kindergarten, Third Grade, English Language Arts, and Science Lab, and as a school-level curriculum coordinator. She was named District Teacher of the Year for the McCormick County School District in 1999. In her current position, she also serves as the District SIC Contact for Abbeville County. Smith holds the Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Phoenix, and the Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Lander University.

Fred S. Washington, Jr., currently serves as Chairman of the Beaufort County Board of Education. He recently retired as Director of the Beaufort County Department of Social Services, a position he held for 27 years. His professional work also includes service as a VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) Worker and Supervisor, Director of Hawthorne House Community Center in Roxbury, Mass., Manpower Director of Beaufort-Jasper Comprehensive Health Services, Pupil Personnel Services Director for the Beaufort County School District, and Interim Director of the Colleton County Department of Social Services. Washington is a graduate of Boston University.

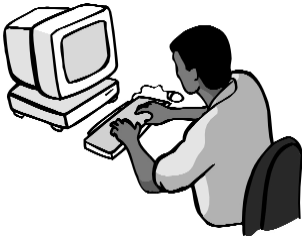
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*We must accept life for what it actually is, a challenge to our quality without which we should never know of what stuff we are made, or grow to our full stature.*

- Robert Louis Stevenson

## It's Almost November... Do You Know Where Your SIC Is?

By South Carolina state law, all SIC membership must be reported to the SC School Improvement Council by **November 15** of each school year. Your school and district office accomplishes this task using an online database tool known as the SC-SIC Member Network. The Member Network catalogs School Improvement Council membership and reports on SIC compliance with SC state law. It is unique to SC-SIC and is the only product of its kind in the state's public education community, documenting thousands of individuals devoted to advancing civic engagement in public education in South Carolina.



For SIC members and the general public, "View the SIC Members" is a read-only function that enables the public to view SIC membership and Compliance Reports for all School Improvement Councils. No password is necessary to access Read-Only information and the information is not downloadable. Visit the SC-SIC Member Network at <https://sic.ed.sc.edu/network/default.asp> to check out this new feature!

## On-Call for "At Risk" Schools

The SC School Improvement Council state office operates under a legislative directive to provide direct services to the state's "At Risk" schools. For answers to your questions and concerns, to schedule training, or for other technical assistance you may contact our Council Specialists, Diane Jumper and Barbara Weston.

**Barbara Weston**  
803-730-4890



Allendale County	Jasper County
Bamberg 2	Kershaw County
Barnwell 19	Lee County
Barnwell 45	Lexington 4
Beaufort County	Marion 1
Calhoun County	Marion 2
Clarendon 1	Marion 7
Colleton County	Marlboro County
Darlington County	Orangeburg 3
Dillon 1	Orangeburg 4
Dillon 2	Orangeburg 5
Fairfield County	Richland 1
Florence 1	Sumter 2
Florence 3	Sumter 17
Florence 4	Williamsburg County
Hampton 2	

**Diane Jumper**  
803-212-8866

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Charleston County  
Cherokee County  
Chester County  
Chesterfield County  
Dorchester 4  
Edgefield County  
Greenville County  
Newberry County  
Spartanburg 7  
York 3



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