



EOC Conducts Report Card Workshops

by Debbie Elmore

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) was pleased to partner with the South Carolina School Improvement Council and other state organizations to offer workshops for parent leaders on the school and district report cards.

The EOC is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business persons, and elected officials who are appointed by the legislature to monitor and review the implementation of the 1998 South Carolina Education Accountability Act.

More than 200 parents and school advocates throughout South Carolina attended the Saturday morning workshops in August and September in Greenville, Columbia, Florence, Aiken and North Charleston.

Workshop participants were provided with information on the contents and purposes of the school report card and learned how they can use data and other report card information to drive positive school-community discussion and action focusing on ensuring all students achieve.

Each workshop participant and every SIC chair will be sent a new EOC publication entitled *Using Report Cards to Ensure Quality Schools: A Resource for Parents* in time for the second annual statewide release of school and district report cards in November.

The idea to provide a forum for parents to learn about their role in using report cards as tools for school improvement grew out of responses from parents who participated in an EOC focus group study on school report cards this past February.



EOC Chairman
Bob Staton

Many parents stated that while they reviewed their child's report card, they weren't sure what to do with the information or how to provide feedback to the schools.

"Creating the data and the report cards is only half of the process," EOC Chairman Bob Staton said in announcing the workshops. "Now we have to help parents and advocates of children understand how the many components of the cards can be used to raise student achievement. Information without subsequent action will not get us to where we want to be."

Workshops featured the presentation of information on school report cards and the state's education accountability system by EOC staff and members. Presentations were followed by several group activities in which participants utilized data and information in a sample middle school report card to discuss and develop strategies for improvement.

Participants were asked to review all of the student achievement data and other information on the report card individually and then discuss, as a group, what each believed were issues or factors in the

school impacting student achievement. Quality classroom teachers and instruction, school leadership, student and teacher attendance, and parental and community support were noted as key issues.

Responses and comments by participants completing workshop evaluation forms were overwhelmingly positive for each session. Most stated they had a better understanding of how to interpret the school report card information and would like to recreate the same discussions with their own school report cards. "It is our hope that all parents who understand the fundamental aspects of the report card will be willing to help others use them as a tool for increasing achievement for all students," Staton said. "It will take the collective action of educators, students, parents, and community leaders focusing on school improvement through data driven decision making if our state is going to achieve its goal of being in the top half of the states nationally."

Responses from workshop participants and further information about the school report cards is available in the Information for Parents Section on the EOC Web site at www.sceoc.org.

You may contact Debbie Elmore, Communications Director for the SC Education Oversight Committee at 803.734.6148 or delmore@eoc.state.sc.us.

(See related story, page 4.)

SIC State Meeting!

December 5, 2002 at 7:00 PM

SCETV satellite channel D-303

Ask your media specialist to tape it!

Topics include:

**Preparing the Report to the Parents
&
Focus on School Report Cards**

with Dr. Sandra Lindsey, SDE
& Dr. JoAnne Anderson, EOC

Rebroadcast:

Friday, December 13, 2002

10:00 AM – channel D-310

Get your questions answered!
Email questions to sic@gwm.sc.edu
by November 25

In This Issue...

- Message from the E.D. pg. 2
- District Contacts Named pg. 3
- Action Timeline pg. 3
- Avenues to Improvement pg. 4
- Truancy Recommendations .. pg. 5
- FYI - Riley Award pg. 6



Message from . . . the Executive Director

Changes – And More Changes! We are now **South Carolina School Improvement Council (SC-SIC)**. What's in a name? Easy recognition, easy to say, and meaningful. SC-SIC has a new name, a new logo, and this newsletter is now known as the *Council News*. What has not changed is that this office is, just as it has for the last 25 years, *assisting schools statewide*.

Regional offices were added last year to provide better access to training and assistance. As a result, the number of workshops and school-site services increased the overall statewide assistance to councils by 250%. That increase occurred even as we targeted assistance to the schools designated as unsatisfactory. Out of 76 schools visited by an External Review Team (ERT), staff provided assistance to 48 of them by the end of the school year. SC-SIC staff will serve even more schools this year.

Written materials are an important part of the assistance provided to all council members. A new *Handbook for Effective School Improvement Councils in South Carolina-The Basics* was published and distributed. The second printing finally met the demand: 13,540 handbooks in SIC members' hands. Budget reductions and mid-year cuts likely will prohibit a needed third printing. The turnover rate for councils is about 50% given the 2-year staggered term required by law. This year's new members can download a copy from the SC-SIC web site if a printed copy is not available to them.

Information for all 16,000+ SIC members from more than 1100 schools was entered into the SC-SIC database before the end of the school year using a new electronic collection process. This year, all SIC members are also being asked to submit a day time phone number and an email address if they have one.

SC-SIC expects to distribute five issues of the *Council News* this year. Only four issues were distributed last year due to mid-year budget cuts. In the face of a reduced budget this year and the promise of another mid-year budget cut, the newsletter will be sent electronically starting in January to school and district personnel serving on the SICs. The newsletter will continue to be printed and mailed to parent, student, and community members unless they provide an email address as well. SC-SIC anticipates a savings of about 45% annually for the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter. In addition, those with email addresses will receive the newsletter as soon as it is written without waiting for it to be printed and mailed.

After 25 years providing assistance to South Carolina's council members, SC-SIC still celebrates the importance of that assistance at the school and district level. The availability of fast and efficient communications via email and quick access to information via the web site means more and more SIC members will be served better and faster. The budget limitations make this technology a blessing and we must use it. The SC-SIC web site has been updated with more information than ever before: sample reports, self-assessment profile, sample bylaws, calendar of training events, past issues of newsletters with subject index and SIC Conference information and registration.

Join SC-SIC in celebrating 25 years of School Improvement Councils in South Carolina. Take any opportunity to share with your school, district, and community the work of your SIC and then join with other SIC members at the annual SIC Conference on March 22, 2003 to affirm the conference theme, "Your Voice Matters." And be sure to let us know how we can serve you better in the future.

Jean M. Norman

REMINDER: The SC-SIC website address has changed! Please update your web bookmark to www.ed.sc.edu/sic.

SC-SIC Board of Trustees

Robert Zuercher, Chair - Myrtle Beach
Betty Gregory, Vice-Chair - Columbia
Patrick Cobb - Columbia
Dr. Bruce Field - Columbia
Orlando Gonzalez - Columbia
Candy Leggett - Sumter
Richard Mock - Charleston
Chief Patty Patterson - Sumter
Gail Phillips - Aiken
Tom Richardson - Moncks Corner
Imogene Steele - Lancaster
Nell Stewart - Greenville
Thessa Smith - Greenwood
W. Reed Swann - Barnwell

SC-SIC Staff

Jean M. Norman, Ed.D.
Executive Director

Cassie Barber
Associate Director

Jennifer Robinson
Lowcountry Regional Coordinator
(1-877-519-4765)

Beth Fincher
Upstate Regional Coordinator
(1-877-519-4764)

Weldon Horne
Administrative Coordinator

Barbara Purvis
Staff Assistant

*COUNCIL NEWS... is an
award winning publication of SC
School Improvement Council.
Circulation 16,500. Your comments
and articles are welcome.
Contact Cassie Barber, Editor, at:*

**USC College of Education
Wardlaw Bldg., Room 001
Columbia SC 29208**

**800-868-2232
803-777-7658**

sic@gwm.sc.edu

www.ed.sc.edu/sic

The University of South Carolina system provides affirmative action and equal opportunity in education and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or veteran status.

SIC District Contacts Named

The superintendent of every school district has named a District Contact to collaborate with SC-SIC to coordinate services and training for SICs and act as a resource for local school improvement councils. SICs are encouraged to notify their District Contact about meetings, solicit information from them about the district, and seek their assistance to fulfill the council's role and responsibilities.

Abbeville, Dr. Sabra Price; **Aiken**, Mr. Warren Whitson; **Allendale**, Ms. Tammy Butler; **Anderson 1**, Dr. John Pruitt; **Anderson 2**, Dr. Dawn Busa; **Anderson 3**, Ms. Gail R. Southard; **Anderson 4**, Ms. Anne Purser; **Anderson 5**, Ms. Carol Vickery; **Bamberg 1**, Dr. Rick Starr, **Bamberg 2**, Dr. V. Sherill Brackett; **Barnwell 19**, Ms. Nancy Richardson; **Barnwell 29**, Ms. Virginia Kay Williams; **Barnwell 45**, Ms. Carolyne S. Williams; **Beaufort**, Mr. John C. Williams; **Berkeley**, Dr. Michael Turner; **Calhoun County School District**, Dr. Walter L. Tobin; **Charleston**, Mr. Rod Spaulding; **Cherokee**, Mrs. Elizabeth Ivey; **Chester**, Mr. Larry B. Heath; **Chesterfield**, Ms. Pat Hendrickson; **Clarendon 1**, Ms. Cathleen Skelley; **Clarendon 2**, Mr. John Tindal; **Clarendon 3**, Dr. David A. Sherbine; **Colleton**, Mr. Charles Gale; **Darlington**, Ms. Maureen Thomas; **Dillon 1**, Ms. Joan Beth Page; **Dillon 2**, Ms. Flossie Bartell; **Dillon 3**, Ms. Cynthia M. LeGette; **Dorchester 2**, Mr. Mike Windham; **Dorchester 4**, Ms. Joyce Davis; **Edgefield**, Mr. David M. Mathis; **Fairfield**, Mr. Daniel E. Miller; **Florence 1**, Mr. Jack Sullivan; **Florence 2**, Dr. Steve W. Quick; **Florence 3**, Ms. Lynda P. Hawkins; **Florence 4**, Ms. Bertha W. McCants; **Florence 5**, Mr. Randy Smiley; **Georgetown**, Ms. Patti Hammel; **Greenville**, Dr. Carlton Sapp; **Greenwood 50**, Ms. Martha Vincent; **Greenwood 51**, Ms. Arlene O'Dell; **Greenwood County 52**, Dr. Dan W. Powell; **Hampton 1**, Mr. Danny All; **Hampton 2**, Mrs. Louise Deloach; **Horry**, Ms. Joan Grimmitt; **Jasper**, Ms. Shirley Garvin; **Kershaw**, Dr. Mary Catherine Norwood; **Lancaster**, Ms. Carolyn Jordan; **Laurens 55**, Ms. Mary Fortune; **Laurens 56**, Ms. Laura C. Koskela; **Lee**, Ms. Roberta Wider; **Lexington 1**, Ms. Jane Brailsford; **Lexington 2**, Ms. Kay H. Gossett; **Lexington 3**, Dr. Wanda Whatley; **Lexington 4**, Dr. Linda Hawkins; **Lexington 5**, Mr. Buddy Price; **Marion 1**, Mr. Cleo Richardson; **Marion 2**, Mr. James Hall; **Marion 7**, Dr. Jane Pulling; **Marlboro**, Mr. Herbert Gould; **McCormick**, Ms. Jackie Brown; **Newberry**, Dr. Cynthia Downs; **Oconee**, Ms. Kathy Whitmire; **Orangeburg 3**, Dr. Pauline Bryant; **Orangeburg 4**, Ms. Angela Wimberly; **Orangeburg 5**, Ms. Emmie Thirlwell; **Palmetto Unified**, Ms. Susan Mullis; **Pickens**, Ms. Julie Thompson; **Richland 1**, Ms. Sharon Reynolds Earle; **Richland 2**, Dr. Richard C. Inabinet; **Saluda**, Ms. Mary Alice Quattlebaum; **SC Dept. of Juvenile Justice**, Ms. Meda C. Cobb; **Spartanburg 1**, Dr. Thomas White; **Spartanburg 2**, Mr. Joe Bullington; **Spartanburg 3**, Mr. Pete Pillow; **Spartanburg 4**, Ms. Connie R. McClain; **Spartanburg 5**, Mr. David Henderson; **Spartanburg 6**, Ms. Debra Bishop; **Spartanburg 7**, Mr. Al Jeter, **Sumter 2**, Dr. Sulyn Elliott; **Sumter 17**, Dr. Virginia Brown; **Union**, Mr. Curtis Dunbar; **Williamsburg**, Ms. Priscilla Holloway; **York 1**, Ms. Maria R. Duncan; **York 2**, Ms. Barbara B. Parrish; **York 3**, Dr. Gwen Kodad; and **York 4**, Dr. Chuck Epps.

SIC Action Timeline



Mark your calendar and plan for the important activities and deadlines below:

NOVEMBER

- 15th: deadline for 1st round of Riley Award applications
- Membership information has been sent to district for transmittal to SC-SIC.
- SIC is organized around the school renewal plan goals or strategies.
- Early information is reported about plan implementation progress.
- Distribution of School Report Card is publicized.
- Develop plans to assist school working with parents to understand information on the School Report Card.

DECEMBER

- 5th: 7 PM - view or tape SIC State Meeting via SCETV satellite channel D-303.
- 13th: 10 AM - SIC State Meeting rebroadcast via SCETV satellite channel D-310.
- Determine information to include in Report to Parents (Feb. 1).
- Committees assigned to gather and draft information for the Report.
- Reports continue about plan implementation progress.
- 15th: semi-finalists for Riley Award notified.

JANUARY

- Revise section drafts and do final edits for Report to Parents (Feb. 1).
- Determine printing and distribution method for the Report.
- Prepare to revise renewal or improvement plan if visited by ERT.

FEBRUARY

- 1st: Report to the Parents due.
- 1st: Supporting evidence from Riley Award semi-finalists due.
- 18th: 7 PM - view or tape SIC State Meeting via SCETV satellite channel D-303.
- 28th: 10 AM - SIC State Meeting rebroadcast via SCETV satellite channel D-310.

MARCH

- 22nd: Silver Anniversary Celebration and 17th Annual Conference, "Your Voice Matters." First annual presentation of the Dick & Tunky Riley School Improvement Award. Sheraton Hotel, Columbia.

APRIL

- 10th: 7 PM - view or tape SIC State Meeting via SCETV satellite channel D-303.
- 18th: 10 AM - SIC State Meeting rebroadcast via SCETV satellite channel D-310.

MAY

- 5-16 PACT testing.

Avenues to School Improvement

by Dr. Jean Norman

First, the Report Card...

This November, for only the second time, the School Report Card will be distributed. Part of the accountability process, the School Report Card will provide an opportunity to compare ratings and other information from 2001 to 2002. Districts also receive Report Cards, which summarizes information about all schools in the district.

Parents are to receive copies by Nov. 15. The Department of Education has printed a 20% overage for each school. In other words, if there are 450 students in the school, 90 extra copies of the school's report will be sent so that parents whose address has recently changed can still have a copy. There will likely be enough for the school to share with local community members, and place copies at local businesses and offices.

Schools with grades 3-8 will receive an absolute rating based solely on the 2002 PACT scores. They will also receive an improvement rating based on the positive or negative changes in 2002 PACT scores over the previous year. High schools have different criteria to achieve ratings. The combined rating was found to be confusing and not useful and will not appear on the Report Card. The ratings will be made public on Nov. 1.

Other information about how students scored based on gender, race, and lunch status is included on page 2. This information is also required by the new federal legislation, No Child Left Behind, and will be used in the future to determine federal ratings of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The stated goal is to reduce the gap within each comparison group with no more than a 10% difference.

The third page of the Report Card contains information about the school, the teachers, the students, and the principal. This information will be especially useful to study, as it is included on the Report Card only because it has influence or contributes to student achievement. The fourth page contains the narrative written by the principal in conjunction with the SIC describing the school, the challenges, and the successes. Also listed are the responses of teachers, students, and parents (for the first time) to surveys about their level of satisfaction with the climate of the school.

The School Report Card has lots of data charted, displayed, and summarized. It is important to gain meaning, to interpret, and explain the implications based on two years of information. Connecting this information to the school renewal or school improvement plan is done in the Report to the Parents due Feb. 1.

Then the Report to the Parents...

Reporting the progress made to achieve the goals or strategies of the school renewal or school improvement plan is the main focus of the Report to the Parents. Due by Feb. 1 of each year, this report summarizes progress and indicates what actions are currently underway to extend that progress for the next year. The School Report Card provides data or information by quantities and percents. The Report to the Parents describes and explains that data. Since the PACT scores have already been reported, compared, and rated on the School Report Card, there is no need to repeat them in the Report to the Parents. What is needed is a relationship between the goals or strategies listed for last year, and a brief description of the impact they made on the reported test scores. For example, if concentration on math skills was a strategy last year, it would be expected to show up in improved math scores on the PACT this year.

If other standardized tests were given, such as the Terra Nova, then reporting the summary of results would be appropriate. If the school includes grade 1, the percent of students assessed as "ready" might be reported. Other types of data related to test scores that might be included are: the number or percent of students retained, the number or percent of students tested off grade level and the impact on the ratings, or the number of students successfully completing a specialized exam such as the Duke program for 8th graders.

There is more to the school than the test scores, and this report is the opportunity to share that information. Tell the parents and the community how good your students are in ways not reported on the School Report Card. Indicate the awards, recognitions, and participation level of the students in a variety of activities. The same goes for the faculty; this is an opportunity to highlight them too. Share what is special about the school, its programs, facilities, history and traditions with the community and parents.

Use this requirement for a report to create an opportunity to tell the story of your students and faculty, the families, and the community that supports them. Unless the district has placed requirements about size and format on all schools, then be creative about the color of the paper, the use of different fonts and print size, and how you fold the paper to create a brochure of several pages.

Be sure to include the school address, phone number, email and web site. Locate the mission statement near the beginning and list the SIC members as the source of the report. The school symbol or mascot can be used to connect the parts of the report into an attractive, readable, informative report that parents and others will be eager to read.

Samples of several schools' 2001 Report to the Parents can be found on the SC-SIC web site. Find parts of different reports that appeal to you and adapt them for your school's Report to the Parents. Contact SC-SIC staff for assistance, and tune in at your school to the SIC state meeting broadcast on Dec. 5 when examples of the report will be shared and SIC members discuss how they planned the information and designed the format for their report.

SC-SIC Assisting Schools Statewide

- Training at school or district site upon request
- Low Country and Upstate Regional Coordinators
- Newsletter published 5 times a year
- Receive assistance toll-free at: 800-868-2232 OR Email: sic@gwm.sc.edu Website: www.ed.sc.edu/sic
- SIC State Meeting video broadcast 4 times a year
- Annual Conference in Columbia
- Video Lending Library
- Volunteer Board of Trustees representing all regions
- Advocacy for SICs on local, district and state levels

Committee Presents Tenenbaum with Truancy Recommendations

by Jim Foster

A statewide truancy steering committee has released a package of 18 recommendations targeted at keeping students in school.

Key elements of the package include promoting closer cooperation among state and local agencies that work with children and families, researching and replicating effective methods of curtailing truancy, and developing better ways of intervening and helping individual students.

State Superintendent of Education Inez Tenenbaum appointed the 59-member committee* last year and assigned the task of reviewing information from effective truancy prevention and intervention programs, both in South Carolina and across the nation. The group was led by retired Family Court Judge Bill Byars, now Executive Director of the Children's Law Office located at the University of South Carolina, and Dr. Jay Smink, Executive Director of the National Dropout Prevention Center.

Byars and Smink said the committee's 18 recommendations address the various social, economic and legal implications associated with students unlawfully absent from school. Students are considered truant when they have three consecutive unexcused absences or five total unexcused absences in a school year.

"Truancy is a key warning sign that a child is headed for educational failure, social isolation and perhaps even delinquent or criminal activity," said Tenenbaum after being presented with the committee's recommendations. "Students with chronic truancy problems often fall behind in their schoolwork and may eventually dropout of school. This committee has identified solutions statewide that will help address the problem."

Over the past 10 years, South Carolina's dropout rate has remained flat. For every 10 students who enter first grade, three eventually drop out. "That statistic represents a very sad reality because it means that thousands of South Carolina children have the deck stacked against

them right from the outset," Tenenbaum said. "The work of this steering committee illustrates our state's commitment to address the dropout problem and its causes."

Deputy Superintendent Calvin Jackson, who worked closely with the committee during its yearlong deliberations, said the 18 recommendations form a comprehensive approach. "They address the various risk factors associated with truancy," Jackson said, "and they emphasize innovative ways to share information with educators and parents, as well as with the General Assembly and other key decision-makers."

Tenenbaum pledged to move the committee's work forward. "We will work closely with our partnering organizations and local communities to carry out these recommendations," she said. "We're going to uncover and address the root issues associated with poor attendance."

Although the 59-member committee will now disband, a smaller task force of about 25 members will be created whose members will represent educators, parents, law enforcement and the judiciary, and state and local agencies. Tenenbaum said the new task force's main role will be to monitor the implementation of the 18 recommendations and to provide advice and guidance on truancy issues. For more information, contact Melissa Lindler, Office of Safe Schools, SDE, 803-734-8101.

* SC-SIC Associate Director, Cassie Barber, served on the committee.



State Superintendent
Inez Tenenbaum

Truancy Committee Recommendations

1. Develop the South Carolina Center for Dropout Prevention and Truancy Programs at the Education Department jointly supported by agencies involved with truancy issues.
2. Develop a statewide truancy advisory committee to offer guidance to the South Carolina Center for Dropout Prevention and Truancy Programs.
3. Develop a series of research-based publications.
4. Develop and implement a statewide truancy information dissemination plan.
5. Develop a plan to initiate and implement a statewide truancy program.
6. Promote the accurate, consistent, and uniform processing of truancy cases.
7. Review existing state laws and regulations regarding school attendance and update statewide guidelines to comply with the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act guidelines (Safe School Guidelines Reporting).
8. Increase the capacity of local communities to develop community-based assessments for truants to determine strengths and needs.
9. Explore and develop nontraditional, specific local community alternatives for truants and other status offenders, focusing on gender specific programs.
10. Develop and adopt a uniform definition of "truancy."
11. Ensure the active participation of youth, parents, and other stakeholders in existing and future local and statewide collaborative efforts regarding truancy.
12. Conduct a statewide survey of local partnerships and collaborations that have been formed to address the issue of truancy.
13. Distribute publications that have been produced by other subcommittees to target audiences with a cover letter from Superintendent Tenenbaum.
14. Submit truancy-related articles for possible publication to newsletters and web sites of school districts and professional organizations.
15. Produce brochures and possibly videotapes with the "It's About Time" slogan and "Keeping Kids in School" message.
16. Produce a special truancy segment for the "In Our Schools" show on SC ETV.
17. Share "Keeping Kids in School" message with public awareness programs on radio and television.
18. Recognize students with good attendance.

FYI...

Riley Award Applications Coming In

Applications for the Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award have been sent to all 2001-2002 SIC Chairs and all 85 District Contacts, who were asked to forward them to principals and others who might be interested.

The award was created by the SC-SIC Board of Trustees in honor and recognition of Former US Secretary of Education Dick Riley and his wife, Tunky. The Rileys accepted the award during last year's SIC Conference. This year, one exemplary School Improvement Council will receive the award named in honor of the couple "who sparked the flame of education improvement" in South Carolina. Four SICs will receive an honorable mention. Secretary and Mrs. Riley have been invited to attend the SIC Annual Conference March 22, 2003 and present the award.

An application can be downloaded from the SC-SIC website www.ed.sc.edu/sic. All SICs are encouraged to share what they have accomplished in their schools and apply for this prestigious award. The first round of applications is due in the SC-SIC office on November 15. For more information contact Cassie Barber 800-868-2232 or barber2@gwm.sc.edu.



*Dick and Tunky Riley
accept the award named
in their honor.*

17th Annual SIC Conference – Call for Presenters

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the 17th Annual SIC Conference, "Your Voice Matters," scheduled for Saturday, March 22 at the Sheraton Hotel Conference Center in Columbia. Detailed conference information and registration form will be available in the Winter 2003 issue of the *Council News* and on the SC-SIC website www.ed.sc.edu/sic in January.

South Carolina's implementation of the Education Accountability Act and the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation have stimulated the public's interest in k-12 education. The SC-SIC office has been receiving an increased number of calls from parents and community members from all over the state asking how they can become active participants in the legislative and school governance process; hence the theme for this year's conference. This year's conference will also mark the 25th Anniversary Celebration of SICs in South Carolina and promises to be a very special and informative day.

Does your SIC have a particularly innovative program or effective activity you would like to share with other SICs? Then consider presenting a session during the conference. Write a brief proposal including the school, district, workshop topic, names of participants, a short description of the content, and your contact information. Mail to Cassie Barber, SC-SIC, College of Education, USC, Columbia, SC 29208 or email to barber2@gwm.sc.edu.