

SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT Council News

"Assisting Schools Statewide"



Fall 2004

Strategic Planning - Simplified!

This year most school improvement councils will be playing an active role in the development of the school's five-year plan. Known as the school improvement plan or the school renewal plan or even the strategic plan, every school and district develops five-year plans to outline where they are going, how they intend to get there and how they will know when they have arrived.

Act 135 and the Education Accountability Act (EAA) are two pieces of legislation enacted by the SC General Assembly that set out requirements for

schools and districts to demonstrate student performance improvement and be accountable for the results. The five-year plan or strategic plan is central to both requirements. The plans are to be developed collaboratively by a broad-based group of stakeholders. What better defines the SIC membership than that requirement?

The strategic plan represents change. Improvement always implies doing something different – change. But change for the sake of changing is not productive. Schools will identify the status of their students' academic performance based on the newly reported PACT scores and other testing information. They will identify what programs or activities are already in place in the school that contribute to the current performance.

Begin with questions:
 How are students performing? In each grade? In each subject?
 What conditions have an affect on student performance?
 What programs or activities are in place already?
 How well are the programs, activities, and practices working?

Smart Goals...



- S**pecific, Data-Driven
- M**easurable and Observable
- A**ttainable, Realistic, Focused
- R**esults Oriented
- T**imebound

Information to have at your finger tips:

- School Report Card
- Standardized test results
- Technology plan
- Facilities study
- Survey results

and analysis

- Instructional strategies and practices
- Professional development plans.

Once the questions are answered using the information available, the school will be able to set goals for student learning.

Generally, a set of steps will be followed in the creation of each goal. Goals indicate the end of the path, but there will be several strategies to get there and activities to be developed for each strategy. Decisions about some strategies will be made by teachers, and some will be suggested by parent and community representatives. The council has the opportunity to make significant contributions during this stage of plan development.

(continued)

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REGISTER NOW for SIC Fall Conferences

The SC-SIC staff has planned an exciting and informative agenda for the series of regional SIC conferences. The three conferences will be held on Saturdays in Mt. Pleasant, Greenville, and Columbia with each event beginning at 9:00 a.m. and concluding at 1:30 p.m. The agenda is the same in each location and SIC members are welcome to attend in the location most convenient for them. Conference attendees will choose two out of four workshop sessions and then everyone will participate in a luncheon featuring a special interactive session on parent involvement. This topic was the number one issue of interest identified by SIC members on a survey conducted over the summer. (See Message from the E.D. on page two for more information about the survey.)

The registration fee is only \$15 and includes the cost of materials and lunch. Each SIC is encouraged to send at least two members to the conference so they can have someone attend each of the four workshop sessions. You won't want to miss this chance to receive hands-on training from the SC-SIC staff and network with other SIC members from across the state. Complete details and a registration form are inside this newsletter. Make plans now to attend – see you there!

- Cassie Barber

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Message from . . . the Executive Director

Survey says... "useful, very useful." That was the response to the survey* sent this summer to all SIC members who attended one of the regional mini-conferences conducted last year by SC-SIC. Not only was the conference considered "useful, very useful" by those

attending, but that was also the response they had about the materials and services that they received.

Ninety-nine percent of those responding reported they had shared what they learned at the conference and that 78% of the SICs took actions based on the shared information. The survey also provided an opportunity for SIC members to indicate topics they had an interest in learning more about. The regional conferences planned for this fall will include information on the topic rated #1: parent/family engagement.

The rate of return for the survey was 45%. Nearly half of those attending the conferences returned the survey which gave the staff confidence they could draw accurate conclusions. As a result, the *Council Update* series will be continued this year but access will be made easier by video and CD distribution. The Handbook will be distributed in print, video, and PowerPoint and all have a Spanish version.

Best of all, the SC-SIC web site has been expanded to include samples of reports and bylaws, past and current newsletters, NCLB Q&A brochures, and more links to other resources than ever before. Anything on the SC-SIC web site can be downloaded and reproduced for use by the SIC and others associated with your school.

Increased access by SIC members to the training and services provided by SC-SIC is a goal of the staff. Let us know how we can assist your SIC in more and better ways.

Best wishes for a successful school year.

*Survey developed and analyzed by Educational Policy Initiatives, Inc

No Child Left Behind Q & A

The implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation has raised many questions among parents and other citizens. The SC School Improvement Council office has received many calls from people who wanted to understand the impact of this sweeping education legislation on South Carolina's public education system. Last year the SC-SIC collaborated with the SC Department of Education and the Parentwise program at Voices for SC's Children to produce a brochure that answers many of those questions. Your response has been so positive that we have reprinted the brochure with financial support from Parentwise. Please call SC-SIC to order copies of the brochure or visit www.ed.sc.edu/sic to download a copy.



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GET READY, GET SET, GO!

SIC Fall Regional Conferences

Locations and Dates

October 30 - Mt. Pleasant
Holiday Inn - Patriot's Point
250 Johnnie Dobbs Blvd. (off US 17)
Call 843-884-6000 for directions

November 6 - Greenville
Greenville Marriott
One Parkway East, I-85, Michelin Exit
Call 864-297-0300 for directions

November 13 - Columbia
Embassy Suites
250 Stoneridge Dr, I-26, Greystone Blvd., Zoo Exit
Call 803-252-8700 for directions



8:30 am	Registration and Coffee
9:00 am	General Session
9:30 am	Concurrent Workshops 1 & 2
10:45 am	Break
11:00 am	Concurrent Workshops 3 & 4
12:15 am	Lunch & Parent Involvement Activity
1:30 pm	Adjourn

Workshop Sessions

1. Strategic Planning Simplified

The SIC is integral to the five-year planning process most schools will go through this year. This interactive workshop will help you learn the state requirements, the steps in the process, where to find information already on hand, and what the plan will actually look like when completed.

2. Speaking Out for Public Education

Staff from the SC School Boards Association will demonstrate a framework SICs can use to help themselves and the greater school community become advocates for public education. Current issues in education will be used to illustrate how action can be taken.

3. "The Basics" of Being an Effective SIC Member

Newly elected and appointed members of the SIC will have questions answered about their role and responsibilities, how to be active participants, techniques for effective meetings, and expectations for the year's activities.

4. How to be a Riley Award Winning SIC

SC-SIC staff will go through each step of the Riley Award application and former winners will discuss how they won this prestigious award. Learn how your SIC will be a winner just by participating in this award process.

Luncheon Activity - Deliberate & Intentional Parent Involvement!

During the morning general session conference participants will complete a short survey that will be compiled to represent them as a school. "School teams" will use the survey results to identify the challenges for their school. Based on Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement, the teams will develop strategies to address the challenges and create a school where the quality and quantity of family engagement increases. Leave with a survey you can use at your school, a series of questions to ask about the results, and a set of strategies to put into use *this year*.

GET READY, GET SET, GO!

SIC Fall Regional Conferences

Registration Form

Check the Date and Location You Plan To Attend

- _____ Oct. 30 - Mt. Pleasant - Holiday Inn Patriots Point (**Registration and Cancellation Deadline: October 22**)
- _____ Nov. 6 - Greenville - Greenville Marriott (**Registration and Cancellation Deadline: October 29**)
- _____ Nov. 13 - Columbia - Embassy Suites (**Registration and Cancellation Deadline: November 5**)

Name _____

Parent Teacher Administrator Student Community Member Other _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Daytime Phone _____

Email address _____

District _____ School _____ Other _____

\$15 Registration Fee includes lunch and materials. No cash or credit cards accepted. Fee will be refunded if the cancellation date is met. You may send a substitute if you cannot attend.

Please mark method of payment below:

Check or money order enclosed / will bring

District and / or school to pay fee - must include Purchase Order # _____

I understand that I am responsible for ensuring final payment of my registration fee regardless of attendance. I also understand that it is my responsibility to make arrangements with the District or School if I expect them to pay my registration fee.

Participant's Signature _____

QUESTIONS? Call 800-868-2232 or 803-777-7658

Please **FAX** completed form to: 803-777-0023 or MAIL to:
SC-SIC, College of Education, Wardlaw 001, USC, Columbia, SC 29208

No on-site registrations, please!!
No **FAXED** or **MAILED** registrations accepted after deadlines listed above.

Important: your registration will be confirmed by email or phone. If you do not receive a confirmation by the day before the conference you should contact the SC-SIC.

Please copy this form as needed and send one registration form for EACH person attending.

“Strategic”
(continued from page 1)

Here is an example:

- **Goal:** increase number of students achieving proficient on PACT math scores from 35% to 75%.
- **Strategy:** additional time for students to learn math concepts will occur in an after-school program that includes homework time and tutoring.
- **Activities** to implement strategy: (1) teacher professional development about math learning practices, (2) create a cadre of volunteers to monitor student homework and provide one-on-one tutoring, and (3) enlist community sponsors for materials and support supplies for students.
- A **timeline** for starting and ending the strategy and activities will be set and a **person responsible** for the implementation will be named. Before completing the steps, the **resources**, both in people and time, and the **cost** must be identified.
- **Evaluation** is too often forgotten, but including this step at the start will let you know if you have reached the goal and how well it has been reached at the end.

The district will outline the planning process and set deadlines for the completion of the various phases. There will be someone at the district level who will be designated as the **person responsible** for the process and they will work with the principals to ensure all school plans are developed. Be sure to learn who that person is and what resources they will provide your school in the planning process.

School improvement councils are integral to the process and the final outcome. The SIC members represent the stakeholders that must be listed as par-

ticipants when the final written plan is submitted. It makes sense that the SIC would be included on that list.

Each school will submit a written plan to the district that is forwarded along with the district plan to the SC Department of Education. The deadline for the submission of the plan is April 30, 2005. This deadline will make it easier for the SIC to develop the report to the parents because you will have all of the information for the report in one place and you will know the information because you have been involved in the process of developing the plan.

Since the planning cycle is five years, the planning for SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) has been coordinated with the strategic planning process. If you have just completed the accreditation process, that plan will be your school’s five-year plan, noting specifically those areas of Act 135 and EAA that SACS does not require.

For information about the requirements, contact Robin Rivers at 803-734-8025, Peter Samulski at 803-734-8345, or Genie Frontz at 803-734-8320 in the Office of School Quality at the SC Department of Education.

Robin Rivers discussed the strategic planning process and SICs on the Council Update program, “Strategic Planning Simplified” aired on September 1, 2004. Ask your media specialist or SIC District Contact about a copy for your SIC, or contact your local Distance Education Learning Center (<http://www.sctv.org/nts.documents/delcs.html>).

– Dr. Jean Norman

Apply for the Riley Award This Year!

The 2004-05 application for the Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award is available for download on the SC-SIC Web site www.ed.sc.edu/sic. Or call the SC-SIC office at 800-868-2232 and ask to have a copy mailed or faxed to you. A special workshop will be featured during the fall regional conferences to help you fill out your application.

SIC Action Timeline



August / September

- **Members elected; Members appointed**
- **Ex-officio notified; Officers elected**
- **SIC member information sent to district**

September

- **Members receive a copy of this year’s plan, budget, 2003 School Report Card, and 2004 Report to the Parents**
- **Organize members into subcommittees**
- **Organize for strategic planning process**
- **Review bylaws; revise if needed**
- **School newsletter article written monthly**
- **Register for regional SIC Conference**

October

- **Prepare Riley Award application**
- **Send members to Regional SIC Conference**
- **Invite SIC District Contact to visit, attend meeting**
- **Prepare for distribution of School Report Cards**



FYI...



SC-SIC Receives National Recognition for Parent Involvement Practice

SC-SIC has been recognized for its efforts to improve school practices that encourage parents' involvement in education. The National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University invites schools, districts, and organizations to submit their successful partnership practices for inclusion in a national publication as a means of sharing good ideas across the nation. *Promising Partnership Practices – 2004* is a collection of parent and community partnership practices selected from 22 states and Canada.

A practice submitted by SC-SIC executive director Dr. Jean Norman will be included in this year's publication. Already in use in some South Carolina schools, the practice outlines a process of creating parent involvement strategies based on information gathered about students' families and the use of a "practices journal" for continued improvement of parent involvement activities.

This and other promising practices published since 1999 can be viewed on the Network's web site: www.partnership-schools.org. Click on "In the Spotlight" and follow the links to "Promising Partnership Practices." When a school or district joins the Network this publication is included at no cost as part of membership.

SC-SIC Associate Director to be a "Fellow"

Cassie Barber, Associate Director of SC-SIC, has been accepted as a SC Education Policy Fellow. The South Carolina program is part of a national program of the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. The ten-month leadership development program provides mid-career professionals with activities to promote skill in developing and implementing public policy on the local, state, and national levels.

Winner of SIC Survey Drawing Announced

Congratulations to Lynn Ferguson from North Elementary School in Lancaster County School District, who won two \$100 gift certificates to purchase books – one for her school and one for herself. SIC members who completed a survey to assess the effectiveness of SC-SIC services were entered in a random drawing to win the certificates.

What is the Value of an SIC?

According to Independent Sector, a coalition of leading nonprofit, foundation, and corporate philanthropy programs, an hour of volunteer time was worth \$17.19 in 2003. If an SIC has twelve members and meets for two hours per month, this volunteer activity represents a monetary value of at least \$4,951. And what is the value of their contribution to their community? Priceless.

**Registration Inside!
Fall Conference**

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