



School Improvement Council Assistance

Back to School 2002

Career Partnerships - Are Your Children Making the Connection?

by Kaye Shaw

U.S. Department of Labor research indicates that by the year 2005, only 21 percent of all the jobs in this country will require managers and professionals with traditional four-year college degrees.

Two-thirds of the jobs in South Carolina are classified as "skilled" which means that they require training beyond high school. How do our students prepare themselves for these changes in the work place?

Science is advancing at incomprehensible speeds. Computers, for example, have opened the door to achievements that were impossible just a few years ago. The impact is being felt everywhere — not just in research, in the development of new medicines, nor in the conquest of space. Businesses by the thousands are being forced to keep up or face the consequences of obsolescence. The following comment by a South Carolina business executive clearly depicts the situation, "If we were doing business today like we were five years ago, we'd be out of business."

Are South Carolina's children being prepared to compete in this ever-changing business environment? If our children are to be ready for the 21st century and its inevitable challenges, we must change the way we teach and learn. The tech prep and school-to-work initiatives were launched in South Carolina, as well as in the rest of the nation, to bring about change in schools. In fact, the South Carolina school-to-work Transition Act of 1994 mandated that the following basic changes be made in our schools: rigorous and relevant courses of study; a comprehensive system of career

exploration and counseling; and work exploration and experience.

This new approach wasn't meant to detract from a "well-rounded," academic education. The purpose was to help students learn more about the application of classroom knowledge in the real world and have opportunities to pursue career possibilities along with their educational goals.

To help students clarify their selection of a career that is best suited to their interests and abilities, the Central Midlands Career Partnership developed four career pathway booklets. This series of booklets aids students

in their search for answers to the following questions: Have you selected a career path best suited to your interests and abilities? Will you be able to enter your chosen career directly after high school, or will you need further training and/or higher education? These are important questions for students to consider before entering the highly competitive and technical work force of the 21st century.

The business partners of the Central Midlands area have formed Alliances to complement these four career pathways. Their members work with the consortium, Midlands Technical College, and the school districts to provide career fairs, career guides, and speakers that will help students select an appropriate career. The career majors or pathways are as follows:

(see *Career*, page 4)

Breakfast Food for Thought!

by Cassie Barber

Parents and educators alike are concerned about improving the nutritional habits of children. They are also searching for new ways to improve the climate and academic standing of schools. A simple meal is one activity that may have a positive effect on all of these issues.

Two years ago, Cindy Jacobs, food service director for Laurens School District 56 identified a serious problem in her district. "I was concerned that a number of



Students deliver pre-packaged breakfasts to classrooms, then help with clean-up.

students were not eating breakfast each school day," said Jacobs. Breakfast was being served at the school before classes began, but few students were taking advantage of the meal. Many students did not appear to be eating breakfast at home before coming to school either, and some often complained of stomachaches and other health problems to the school nurse. Jacobs asked the school board to let her try an innovative approach to solving these problems: *breakfast for every student at their desk every morning AFTER the school bell rang.*

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Message from . . . the Executive Director



There is an old saying that the only thing that never changes is that everything always changes! Like the school districts who are grappling with challenges concerning budget cuts and compliance with accountability issues, we at School Improvement Council *Assistance* are dealing with similar issues. Finding creative solutions to meet these challenges means changing some of the ways in which we serve SIC members.

The SICA budget for this fiscal year has been reduced over last year, and like other agencies and districts we are preparing for the possibility of additional cuts in the fall. To adjust, we have targeted the portion of the SICA budget expended for printing and postage to mail the newsletter to 16,000 SIC members. A creative solution has been found to reduce this expenditure: all school and district based SIC members will receive the SICA News through the Internet beginning in January. Many families in SC do not have regular access to the Internet, so we will continue to print and mail the newsletter to parent and community members unless we are notified of an email address where the newsletter can be sent. This change will cut our newsletter costs in half.

Due to last year's midyear budget cut, SICA was unable to publish the summer issue of the newsletter and the Pee Dee regional coordinator staff position was eliminated. Two full-time professionals are available to provide assistance from the Columbia office located at USC, plus regional coordinators in the Upstate and the Low Country. All SIC members, no matter what part of the state they live in, are encouraged to contact the Columbia office with questions and concerns via email or toll free: 800-868-2232.

SICA staff has been reduced, but additional requirements have been mandated. A new legislative proviso added to the state budget bill obliges SICA to provide direct assistance to schools and districts rated "unsatisfactory" if it is determined that they need help developing effective SICs. An estimated 100 schools will receive targeted attention. Many well established SICs around the state are ready to go "beyond the basics" and need assistance to tackle complicated issues like analyzing and utilizing report card data and developing comprehensive parent and community involvement plans. For SICA to respond to this wide range of needs, the staff is designing a variety of training aids for district and school staff to use during the "basic orientation" training conducted for SIC members in conjunction with the use of the Handbook. SICA staff will also be more available to design and conduct additional levels of training.

Announcements of further changes and innovations will occur in the coming months. Your ideas and feedback on how we can serve you better is welcome and encouraged. Let us hear from you. Thank you for all you do for our children and our schools.

Jean M. Norman

You Are Important to Us!

The type and amount of information we need to share changes along with technology. Our computerized database helps us send out newsletters and other materials to support the work of school improvement council members. Each School Improvement Council member is asked to submit their name, home address, daytime phone number, and email address (if you have one) to the school. Schools send the completed SIC roster to the district office, which records it in a computer file and transmits it to the SICA Columbia office. The deadline for the District to submit the electronic file is November 15, so please report your information as soon as you can.

The sooner we have your information, the sooner we can update our database to ensure you receive the information you need to do the work of your council effectively. Schools are asked to be sure they send their information to their district office and not to SICA. Thanks for helping us stay in touch.

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Who Serves on South Carolina's SICs?

by Dr. Jean Norman

Council membership consists of parents, teachers, and students plus community members (non-parent taxpayers) and administrators (principals). Based upon the SICA database this is how it breaks out by percentages.

SIC membership by type:

Parents – 47%
 Teachers – 25%
 Students – 6%
 Community members – 11%
 Administrators – 11%

Membership is categorized as elected, appointed, or ex-officio (named to the council based on the leadership position in a school organization or program, such as the principal, PTA/O president, business partner, Teacher of the Year). This is how the categories are distributed by percentages.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>SIC membership by category:</i> | <i>by school type:</i> |
| Elected – 57% | Elementary – 57% |
| Appointed – 31% | Middle School – 24% |
| Ex-officio – 12% | High School – 19% |

SIC Chair Data

Each SIC elects its chairperson from the membership of the elected and appointed members. 95% of the councils elect one person as the Chair, but it was found that 5% elected two people as Chair (co-chairs or husband and wife teams are the most common of these SICs). SIC Chairs were held by all categories of membership as shown by the following percentages.

SIC Chair by membership type:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Parents – 66% | Administrator – 4% (it is noted here that this may be an error in reporting or an error in operation; it will be investigated by SICA staff) |
| Teachers – 20% | |
| Community member – 10% | |
| Student – 1 SIC (0.11%) | |

When the data about the SIC Chair was examined to explore what category of membership was represented, the percentages reflected a consistency regarding administrators which are ex-officio.

SIC Chair by membership category:

Elected – 70%
 Appointed – 26%
 Ex-officio – 4%

Council Size

The size of the School Improvement Council is required by law as to minimum number elected and appointed plus at least one ex-officio, the principal. SIC membership varies according to school type because students are required to participate at the high schools (grades 9-12). Councils were examined as to their numbers and 94% did meet the minimum requirements (ES – 7, MS – 7, HS – 10).

The work of the councils has increased over the years and the total membership is above the minimum for most schools. The average size council is 13 but varies by school type as the following percentages show.

SIC average size by school type:

Elementary – 11
 Middle School – 13
 High School – 18

School Improvement Council *Assistance* is required by law to collect the membership information for all council members in the state. The results reported above were calculated from the information sent to SICA from the school districts.

The conclusions reported here raise questions for SICA staff about the accuracy of the reported data, a situation that can be remedied through work with the reporting process. Other questions the data raise have to do with the appropriate composition of the council, its leadership, and its compliance with statute that will be addressed through training with school and district personnel responsible for council operations locally.

The membership information is maintained on a database by SICA and is used for the purpose of sharing information such as this newsletter sent to all SIC members five times a year. An independent consultant conducted the analysis of the membership database.

Special SIC Conference News

The SICA staff is already working on the **17th Annual School Improvement Council Conference** set for **Saturday, March 22, 2003** at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in Columbia. Keynote speakers and special guests will be announced soon. This conference will also mark the silver anniversary celebration of School Improvement Councils in South Carolina, so mark your calendar, it's going to be a good one.

Riley Award

This year's agenda will feature the presentation of the first *Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award* to an outstanding School Improvement Council. Award criteria will be announced in the next issue of the *SICA News*. Hint: start by making sure your council is in compliance with the state laws regarding council composition and responsibilities.

Call for Presenters

Does your SIC have a great program or special activity that you would like to share with others? The Annual SIC Conference is the perfect opportunity for councils from around the state to share their successes with others during a workshop session. If your council is interested in doing a workshop at the conference, please write a brief proposal, including the school, district, workshop topic, names of participants, a description of what you would like to present, and your contact information. Councils chosen to present workshops will be given mileage reimbursement (outside Columbia) and complimentary conference registration for up to three participants. Mail proposals to Cassie Barber, SICA, College of Education, USC, Columbia, SC 29208 or email barber2@gwm.sc.edu. Questions? Call Cassie at 803-777-7658 or toll free 800-868-2232.

Career

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Business and Information Systems: This pathway is best suited for students who prefer a well-ordered environment, possibly working with facts, numbers and data. Students who choose this pathway should have the ability to speak and write clearly. Students in this major should also enjoy working with tools, machines and equipment and should work well independently. Possible job opportunities include computer programmer, web designer, legal assistant/paralegal, business manager, bank teller, accountant and certified financial planner.

Engineering and Industrial Technologies: Here, skills learned will include an understanding of cause and effect, problem-solving and mathematics, mechanical ability, manual dexterity and hand-eye coordination. Possible job opportunities include heavy equipment operator, construction estimator, welder, desktop publisher and engineer.

Health Sciences: This pathway will attract students who have the ability to get along with a variety of people. They may like working in a lab or providing service to other people and feel rewarded by helping others in need. Possible job opportunities include nursing assistant, dental hygienist, home health nurse, occupational therapy assistant, emergency medical technician and health educator.

Public Services: This pathway best serves students who have the ability to get along with a variety of people, enjoy helping others learn new things or acquire information and enjoy seeing that the personal comfort and needs of others are being met. Possible job opportunities include firefighter, school counselor, teacher, social worker, police officer and psychologist.

After a student has decided which pathway he or she might like to follow, the opportunities to gain “real world” experience include the following:

- Apprenticeships (registered or youth) where students participate in a highly structured combination of classroom study and paid work experience.
- Cooperative education that combines classroom instruction with paid or unpaid work experience.
- Internships that permit students to spend several days or weeks getting on-the-job experience related to their career choice.
- Job Shadowing where students can explore different occupational choices by observing work sites for up to one day
- Service Learning that gives students a chance to work at a community agency or work site.
- Mentoring that provides students with an opportunity to work with a professional in a chosen career field for a defined period of time

So where does all this leave us? It leaves our children with boundless opportunities to prepare themselves for the future. Sure, it’s a cliché, but it’s also true. People talk endlessly about preparing our children for the future. The future is here, but luckily so is the Central Midlands Career Partnership whose education and business partners work together to help all of our students prepare for a brighter future.

To find out more about the activities of Central Midlands Career Partnership and the fifteen other consortia around the state, visit our web site at www.centralmidlands.com or call the consortium office at 803-252-2895.

Kaye Shaw is Director of the Central Midlands Career Partnership, which includes Richland, Lexington and Fairfield Counties.

I Found It . . .



on the Internet!

Have you visited the SICA website lately? The World Wide Web, also known as the Internet, is the fastest method we have to communicate with the more than 16,000 School Improvement Council members in South Carolina and SICA will be using this important tool more than ever this school year. The SICA staff has been working to improve the website to make sure the information your SIC needs is at your fingertips 24 hours a day.

A short tour of the SICA website will take you to pages that include basic information about our office and the role and responsibilities of SICs. You can download complete copies of the **SIC Handbook “The Basics”** and the brand new handbook module, **Creating an Education Foundation for Your School**, along with video agreement forms and samples of SIC by-laws and the Report to the Parents. Need to find the name of your SIC District Contact? The list is on the website. Are you curious about the state laws regulating SIC form and function? Now you can link to the statehouse to read them.

You can also learn about numerous conferences, workshops and more by visiting the Events page. Ever wondered about who makes up the SICA Board of Trustees and Staff? We’re all on the website. You can also link to a wide variety of other child and education related websites and even visit the home page of the University of South Carolina and the College of Education, where SICA is located.

Our shortened web address – www.ed.sc.edu/sica - makes it even easier to visit us. If you do not have access to the Internet at work or at home, take our web address to your public library and ask the librarian to show you how to access the site. We’ll be adding and updating information regularly, so make sure to visit often. If you have questions or suggestions for improving the site, please email us at sica@gwm.sc.edu. We’ll do our best to help you find it on the web!

**Does your SIC need handbooks?
Call 1-800-868-2232
or visit www.ed.sc.edu/sica**

SICA Board of Trustees Welcomes New Members



Thessa G. Smith

Two new members have been elected to the SICA Board of Trustees. SICA is grateful for this opportunity to benefit from the experience and expertise of the Board of Trustees members.

Thessa G. Smith is a native of Greenwood, SC, where she attended the public schools. A graduate of Limestone College, Ms. Smith is pursuing a Masters of Business Science degree from Southern Wesleyan University. A very busy wife and mother of two children, Ms. Smith is the Assistant County Manager for Greenwood County. She is also the Pastor Assistant for Flint Hill Missionary Baptist Church and has served on the Mary Wood Elementary SIC.



W. Reed Swann

W. Reed Swann has devoted most of his adult life to public education. Formerly the principal of Barnwell High School, Mr. Swann previously served as an assistant superintendent and principal of York High School in York School District 1, and has been an assistant principal, teacher and coach. Now retired, he is currently a member of the Board of Trustees for Barnwell School District 45 and is the president elect of the South Carolina School Boards Association.

Breakfast

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The school board was concerned about the cost, but Jacobs pointed out that more than 60% of the students qualified for federally subsidized meals. The federal subsidy would be enough to cover the cost of breakfast for other students who didn't qualify for the program, so the cost would be minimal. Jacobs got permission to launch her universal breakfast program at M.S. Bailey Elementary School.

At first, teachers balked at the idea, concerned that their classrooms would be covered in spilled milk and syrup and that class time would be lost. Jacobs and her team worked to develop healthy breakfasts that were portable and easy to clean up. Breakfast was scheduled for homeroom, during roll call and announcements.

Universal breakfast was a hit – a hit with a litany of positive results. Health room visits went down, absences and tardies were reduced, and the general mood of the school improved. Inspired by Bailey's success with the program, Bell Street Middle School decided to give universal breakfast a try. The older children liked the breakfast as much as their younger counterparts. Amanda Morgan, a student at Bell Street Middle reports, "I never used to eat breakfast, but now I eat it every day."

Says M.S. Bailey Principal, David Pitts, "The universal breakfast program has become a part of the culture of the school. We continue to experience success with this effort in the areas of beginning school smoothly, reduced numbers of students visiting the health room, and most importantly, students are offered something to eat every day they come to school." Teachers are avid supporters of the program. "Breakfast in the classroom has calmed students down in the morning. After each child eats breakfast, they clean up, listen to announcements, and then are ready to begin instruction," said Bell Street Middle teacher, Norma Tucker.

Speaking for the food service department, Cindy Jacobs says, "What a great way to start the day, having all students eat breakfast. We know we have helped in preparing the students to learn each day." And speaking of learning, Laurens 56 expects to be able to show evidence in 2003 that universal breakfast has had a direct effect on test scores. Now that's the way to start your day!

For more information on how to start a universal breakfast program in your school, contact Cindy Jacobs at 864-833-0800 or Vivian Pilant, Director, Office of School Food Service and Nutrition, State Department of Education at 803-734-8195.

SICA Action Timeline



September

- Elections for parents, students, & teachers completed
- Recommend community members for appointment
- Publicize SIC election results, community appointments, ex-officio members
- Send SIC membership information to district office
- Convene SIC, elect officers, review bylaws, make committee assignments
- 12 – SIC District Contact Meeting, SCASA offices, Columbia
- 19 – SIC State Meeting, 7-8 p.m., SCETV Channel 303 closed circuit

October

- Review PACT data received by school mid-September
- Assist in the preparations for the School Report Card distribution
- Organize committees monitoring improvement strategies
- Review analysis of parent, teacher, student surveys
- 15 – Deadline for SIC elections; send SIC membership information to district office

November

- Review Report Card information
- Assist with parent sessions explaining the Report Card
- Receive reports from committees monitoring strategy implementation
- Begin to gather information to be included in Report to the Parents
- 15 – Deadline for SIC information sent to SICA by the district

SIC State Meetings

SICA will host four statewide meetings this school year via satellite thanks to SC ETV. Mark your calendar now!

Live Broadcasts 7-8 p.m. Channel 303
 September 19, 2002
 December 5, 2002
 February 18, 2003
 April 10, 2003

Repeat Broadcasts 10-11 a.m. Channel 310
 September 27, 2002
 December 13, 2002
 February 28, 2003
 April 18, 2002

Reaching Out to Teen Smokers

Not On Tobacco (N-O-T) is a state-of-the-art program specifically designed for teenagers who want to stop smoking. It was developed by the American Lung Association in collaboration with researchers at West Virginia University. Initial results from an ongoing national evaluation show that N-O-T does help teens stop smoking or reduce the number of cigarettes they smoke, which is often the first step to quitting entirely.

N-O-T helps teens beat their smoking addiction by:

- Identifying the reasons why they smoke
- Pinpointing the social influences that affect smoking behavior
- Combating social pressure from friends and family who smoke
- Understanding the immediate benefits of quitting
- Setting realistic and attainable goals for change
- Developing like management skills that go beyond giving up smoking

For a short time, materials and training will be provided by the American Lung Association of South Carolina at no cost. If you are interested, please contact Greg White at 1-800-LUNG-USA for more information.

Education Oversight Committee Update

New Members

In accordance with the Education Accountability Act the terms of several Education Oversight Committee (EOC) members expired over the summer; the Governor and members of the House and Senate appointed replacements. New members include: Columbia teacher Traci Young Cooper; Wallace Hall, an assistant principal from Abbeville; Senator Hugh Leatherman, Florence; Columbia business man Harry Lightsey; Conway business man Harold Stowe; and Representative Robert Walker, Spartanburg. Orangeburg Senator John Matthews was reappointed by Governor Hodges following his service representing the Senate Finance Committee. The State Superintendent of Education became a permanent EOC member.

School Report Card Ratings Calculations

The EOC has developed a series of four presentations about calculating the ratings for the School Report Card. SCETV will broadcast these presentations in a block feed on closed circuit into your school. All presentations air at 2:00 p.m. and topics include:

Sept. 16 - Calculating the School and district Ratings

Sept. 24 - Calculating the 3-8 Ratings

Sept. 30 - Calculating the 9-12 Ratings

Oct. 9 - Calculating the Career Center and District Ratings

To learn more about these topics and more, visit www.state.sc.us/eoc or call the EOC at 803-734-6148.