



School Improvement Council Assistance

Winter 2002

“The New American Family and The School” 16th Annual SIC Conference March 2, 2002

The 16th Annual School Improvement Council Conference, “The New American Family and the School”, will focus on the changing nature of the American family and how schools respond to those changes. School policy and practices can encourage or interfere with family participation and student success.

Co-sponsored by Communities in Schools – SC and the Office of Parental and Community Partnerships at the South Carolina Department of Education, this year’s conference features a nationally respected keynote speaker, a presentation of “Gullah,” special recognition for a beloved former governor and first lady, and inspiring words from one of the state’s best teachers. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to attend two breakout sessions from a field of sixteen choices and visit a variety of exhibits.

The conference will be held at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in Columbia on Saturday, March 2. The \$30 registration fee includes lunch, morning break and materials.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

SICA borrowed the theme of this year’s conference, “*The New American Family and the School*”, from a monograph written by keynote speaker, Dr. Howard Johnston. A dynamic speaker who uses humor and pathos to bring home his



(Dr. Howard Johnston)

innovative strategies for improving education, Dr. Johnston is Professor of Secondary Education at the University of South Florida and a nationally recognized expert on middle schools. You will take home practical ideas for ways your school can work with families to foster achievement and productive behavior.

LUNCHEON PRESENTATIONS

The *Christian Science Monitor* praises former U.S. Secretary of Education and South Carolina Governor Dick Riley as “one of the great statesmen of education in this century.” *The Washington Post* hailed him as one of the “most



(Dick Riley)

decent and honorable people in public life.” He was so popular with the people of South Carolina that they amended their constitution to enable him to run for a second term as governor. As Governor, Riley helped launch historic initiatives to raise academic standards; as Secretary of Education he helped create the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, which today includes over 7,000 groups.

Secretary Riley is married to Ann “Tunky” Riley the beloved former First Lady of South Carolina. Together Dick and Tunky Riley are tireless advocates for family and community involvement in our public schools. In honor of the Rileys’ countless contributions to public education, the SICA Board of Trustees has created the “Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award.” Secretary and Mrs. Riley will be present to accept the award, to be given annually to recognize exemplary School Improvement Councils.



(Tunky Riley)

Mr. Brendon Barber will give a presentation on the Gullah tradition and language of African Americans in the low country. Mr. Barber is the Coordinator of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools for the Georgetown County School District. He is also an adult advisor for the Youth Advisory Board for the SC Office of Safe Schools at the State Department of Education and will also participate in a breakout session on Youth Development during the conference.



(Brendon Barber)

CLOSING MESSAGE

Malinda Taylor was totally surprised when she received the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award and the \$25,000 to go with it, but those familiar with her exceptional teaching skills weren’t surprised at all.

Ms. Taylor, a sixth grade language arts teacher at E. L. Wright Middle School, will share some of the experiences that made her an award-winning educator and send you home feeling inspired.



(Malinda Taylor)

REGISTER TODAY

Conference registration is limited, so please see pages 2 and 3 for more information and page 5 for a registration form.

After School Teleconference

February 20, 2002, 10 - 11:30 AM
Digital Channel 319

Sponsored by USC College of Education and the AfterSchool Alliance.
Live broadcast about afterschool programs and funding. For more information call 803-576-6175.

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School Report Cards Are Out! Let the Dialogue Begin

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Now that the first state school report cards have been issued, School Improvement Councils can initiate opportunities for parents and community members to begin using them to evaluate and improve their school. Below are some ideas for using the report card data for maximum impact.

BEGIN a dialogue focused on the information and facts set out in the Report Card.

BRING together all of the groups of people who have an interest in the school – parents, students, community members, educators.

UNDERSTAND what the facts and information mean for your school, your community, and your students. This may be the first opportunity many people have had to see the information or see it together with related facts. The discussion that is possible now can be the catalyst to promote improvement.

DIALOGUE stimulates those involved in it. For example, when people actually understand the relationship between students ready for school and achievement on the reading test, they want to know how to improve both items. When people understand the number of students retained affects class size and over-age students in the school they want to help find ways to improve the learning and promotion of students. When people understand that other schools like them have solved similar problems, they are motivated to find solutions too.

CREATE A FORUM representative of the total school community. The SIC has the opportunity now to initiate and sponsor or collaborate with other groups to establish with the school a series of forums about the Report Card. For example, parents in a community or neighborhood may sponsor a “coffee” at the community center, club house, or individual home. Another possibility for forums is among the many service clubs, sororities, and church groups in the community where members talk with SIC members, teachers, administrators and students.

ACTION comes from the energy created by the dialogue and discussion. Harness that energy into making and implementing plans to improve even more for next year.

The New American Family and The School

SICA NEWS... is an award winning publication of School Improvement Council Assistance, USC College of Education, Wardlaw Bldg., Room 001, Columbia, SC 29208. Circulation 16,500. Comments, ideas, questions and articles are welcome. Contact Cassie Barber, Editor, at:

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803-777-7658

sica@gwm.sc.edu

www.ed.sc.edu/sica/sica.html

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.

Conference Agenda

Morning

8:15 — 9:15	Registration: Exhibits Open and Refreshments
9:15	General Session: Keynote Address — Dr. Howard Johnston
11:00 — Noon	Workshop Session I

Afternoon

12:15 — 1:15	Luncheon Presentations — The Gullah Tradition: Brendan Barber Award Presentation Honoring Former U.S. Secretary of Education Dick Riley and Mrs. Tunky Riley
1:30 — 2:30	Workshop Session II
2:45 — 3:15	Closing Session: Endnote Address — Malinda Taylor, Milken Family Foundation Award Winner

WORKSHOP SAMPLER

16th Annual SIC Conference

Conference attendees will have the opportunity to choose two sessions from a variety of workshops intended to inform, engage and challenge your School Improvement Council. Below is just a sample of the 16 workshops that will be offered at this year's conference. Council members from the same school are encouraged to attend different sessions to maximize the amount of information you each bring back to your school!

Empowering Youth for Community Development

Featuring student members of School Improvement Councils, this session will focus on the value of helping young people develop their full potential and become leaders. Robert Carlton, Office of Youth Development, DHEC and Dr. Susan Alexander, Office of Safe Schools, SC Department of Education, and Brendon Barber, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Georgetown County School District.

How to Start an Education Foundation

Learn the basics of starting an education foundation for your school from Betsy Wolff, founder of the successful A.C. Flora High School foundation. Copies of SICA's new handbook module on the topic written by Ms. Wolff will be available.

Bridging the Hispanic-Education Gap

Each year sees an increase in the number of Hispanic children attending South Carolina schools. Orlando Gonzalez, Health Coordinator for the SC Hispanic Outreach, will help you understand Hispanic culture and meet the needs of all the children in your school.

The SIC and the Report Card

The Report Cards are now a reality. How can Councils help parents and community members use them effectively to improve the school? Dr. Elizabeth Warren, author of the new SICA handbook module on the report card, and SICA Executive Director, Dr. Jean Norman will help you create a forum for discussion.

Conversation with the Keynoter

This is your chance to participate in a more intimate session with Dr. Howard Johnston. Ask questions and hear more of his solutions for today's families and schools.

Effective School Improvement Councils

A variety of School Improvement Councils from around the state will share their leadership skills, methods, programs, and resources. Councils have been recognized by the SC Board of Education, Schools of Promise, SC Healthy Schools, and other statewide and national organizations for their contributions.

Legislative Update

Learn the latest information on legislative action that affects our children and schools. Senator Warren Giese (invited) chair of the Senate Education Committee and Representative Rita Allison, chair of the K-12 Education Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee.

17 Ways to Create a Culture of Courtesy and Service in Your School

In this fast paced, interactive program, you'll review a checklist of behaviors people consider rude and off-putting in schools. You'll also find out what they respect and admire. Ann Humphries, professional presenter, developer of the Proud to Be Polite video series, and member of the Ridge View High SIC.

SIC Action Timeline



FEBRUARY

- Distribute *Report to the Parents* on Feb. 1 to students' families; also place multiple copies in grocery stores, doctor's offices, realtor's offices, and other businesses in the community.
- Analyze teacher and student survey responses; share the results with teachers and students inviting them to recommend improvements indicated by the analysis.
- Study the information on the School Report Card to learn what it means and how to use it to recommend improvement strategies.
- Plan and sponsor a series of forums for parents to begin the ongoing dialogue about the School Report Card information.
- Continue to monitor the implementation of the strategies and objectives in the school improvement/renewal plan.
- Respond to recommendations made by the ERT if the school was visited.
- Participate in the revision of the school improvement/renewal plan based on the ERT recommendations.

MARCH

- Attend the 16th Annual SIC Conference on March 2 (see p. 5)
- Continue to gather data to monitor strategy implementation.
- Identify what information will be needed to evaluate the progress of strategies at the end of the year.
- Sponsor dialogue forums for parents and community groups about the information on the School Report Card.
- Incorporate the ERT recommended actions into the school improvement/renewal plan.

APRIL

- Start gathering information about strategy effectiveness as part of monitoring process.
- Continue to sponsor dialogue forums about the School Report Card information.
- Organize to evaluate strategy effectiveness and compile information gathered.

— Conference Registration Limited —

SIC members are encouraged to register as soon as possible. The conference is limited to 500 participants and **NO ON-SITE REGISTRATION** will be accepted. SICA is committed to providing our members with the best conference experience possible and to do that, we must have time to properly prepare the convention space, order food, and print enough materials for all attendees. So please fill out and return your registration form today!

Questions About the Report to the Parents?

One of the most common questions asked of SICA staff is, "Now that SICs are writing the Report Card Narrative with the principal, do we still have to write the Report to the Parents?" The answer is yes. The Education Accountability Act added writing the narrative as a new responsibility for Councils. None of the SICs' previous responsibilities were deleted. And that is a good thing, because the narrative is very short and really doesn't give the Council ample opportunity to describe the many programs, achievements and activities taking place in the school. The report is intended to provide the public with a full progress report on implementation of the school's improvement plan.

Another question is, "Does the district Report to the People take the place of the school's Report to the Parents?" The answer is no. The district's report is due November 15 of each year as a summary of the areas of district responsibility: budget, personnel, academic programs, afterschool initiatives, related arts, athletic programs, transportation, security, and facilities. The school's report tells parents and the community how much progress has been made to improve student achievement by focusing on the strategies the school is implementing. For example, if a strategy indicated an afterschool program would be started to extend the time some students need to learn math skills, the report would indicate how many students were involved, what approaches were being used, and what results occur for students attending.

The Report to the Parents, distributed by February 1 of each year, now has the added value of complimenting the information found on the School Report Card. The test information and facts about the school are the basis for why a strategy is being implemented or cause to celebrate the progress being made as a result of a program, approach or activity adopted. The report is often put together by schools as a brochure (tri-fold or halve a 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper) and shared with community offices, agencies, and retail stores. It is also an opportunity to "market" the school beyond test scores. To discuss ideas for your report, call SICA.

Send Us Your Reports!

School Improvement Council *Assistance* is asking all schools to send us one copy of your Report to the Parents. Schools are not required to send their reports to us, but we are interested in learning what is happening in individual schools. SICA will publish some of the best reports on our website so other SICs can get new ideas for creating a report that will be not only an effective reporting instrument, but also a marketing tool for their schools.



The SC General Assembly reconvened on January 8 with education expected to be a top issue during the 2002 legislative session. In the Fall 2001 issue of the SICA NEWS we promised to provide SIC members with resources to help them stay informed on legislative issues affecting education in South Carolina. This column will highlight actions taken by the SC General Assembly during the session and you are welcome to call our office for more information. Federal legislation also affects local education, so be aware of actions taken by the US Congress too.

Your local news media are a good source of education information and legislative activity. Small daily papers and weeklies often provide detailed information on local school and district news that may not be covered in newspapers with larger circulations. School Board meetings are open to the public; you can attend meetings and get the latest news firsthand.

There are a number of professional education associations in the Palmetto State that follow legislative issues closely and pass the information on to their membership in the form of newsletters and action alerts. These associations often have a legislative agenda that will give you insight into the concerns of their constituent group. Most provide updates on South Carolina legislation and also federal updates or links to federal information. The general public can access their websites at no cost to stay informed on education news and legislative action. If you do not have a computer at work or in your home, ask your school principal if you can use a computer at school or go to your public library. If you are not familiar with computers, ask the librarian for help.

The South Carolina Association of School Administrators www.scasa.org and the South Carolina School Boards Association www.scsba.org websites feature South Carolina and federal legislative information.

There are two professional associations for teachers in the state that provide legislative information. Palmetto State Teachers Association www.palmettoteachers.org and the South Carolina Education Association www.thesecea.org.

You can read news releases from the State Department of Education at www.myschools.com and the US Department of Education at www.ed.gov.

The Public Education Network (PEN) will email you the PEN Weekly News Blast for free. PEN's mission is to create systems of public education that result in high achievement for every child. This is the national association of local education funds and is not involved in politics, but is a wonderful resource for the latest education information and trends. Visit www.publiceducation.org to sign up for the news blast and find out about local education funds in South Carolina.

The New American Family and The School

16th Annual SIC Conference

March 2, 2002

Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center
Bush River Road at I-20
Columbia, SC

- Conference capacity — limited to 500. Please register as soon as possible.
- Registration Specifics —
 - Registration fee is \$30.00 per person. This includes conference materials, morning coffee break and luncheon.
 - One completed registration form PER PERSON please. Copy this form as needed.
 - No on-site registrations will be accepted.
 - Three convenient ways to register:
 - *fax*: 803-777-0023
faxed registration deadline: 5:00 pm on Tuesday, 02/26/02
 - *online*: email registration will be accepted via our website at www.ed.sc.edu/sica/sica.html
online registration deadline: 5:00 pm on Tuesday, 02/26/02
 - *US regular mail*: you may send in your completed registration form and payment/purchase order information to:

**SICA - College of Education
Room 001, Wardlaw Building
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208**

US mail deadline: postmark NO LATER THAN 02/22/02

- Your registration is not complete until you have received a confirmation.

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

* REGISTRATION FORM *

Name (*last*) _____ (*first*) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Daytime Phone _____

District _____ School _____

Other _____

PAYMENT METHOD — Please designate below how your registration fee will be paid.
(We apologize for any inconvenience it might cause, but we cannot accept credit cards.)

() district to pay fee
purchase order number _____
auth. representative _____

() school to pay fee
purchase order number _____
auth. representative _____

() check enclosed
___personal ___school ___district office

() money order enclosed

And The Winner Is. . .

SICs Win Volunteer Awards

The School Improvement Councils of Green Sea Floyds Elementary School in Horry County and Theodore Lester Elementary School in Florence District One were honored by the SC State Board of Education. An awards ceremony attended by State Superintendent of Education, Inez Tenenbaum, and State Board members was held at the Adams Mark Hotel in Columbia. The SC Department of Education solicits nominations for the awards every year.

Three Educators Win Milken Awards

Three South Carolina educators received Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards during surprise assemblies at their schools. Educators are chosen for their outstanding educational talent, leadership, and inspiring presence that impacts students, colleagues, and the community. Winners receive a \$25,000 cash award. This year's winners include: Jay Forrest, a music teacher at Clover High School; Jeanne Stiglbaaur, former principal of Hand Middle School, now Dreher High School principal; and Malinda Taylor, a language arts teacher at E. L. Wright Middle School. Ms. Taylor will present the closing remarks at this year's SIC conference.

National Principal of the Year

Dr. Sharon Long Buddin, principal of Ridge View High School in Richland District Two was named Principal of the Year by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in Washington, D.C. A graduate of the USC College of Education and the founding principal at Ridge View High, Dr. Buddin was honored for her willingness to help students, ability to anticipate and solve problems, and consistent improvement of the school's overall learning environment.

FYI...

National School Board Recognition Month

The governance of schools by local citizens is a hallmark of America's system of public education. Each January the unique role of school boards in governing

America's public schools receives special attention during National School Board Recognition Month. The theme, **Focusing on Student Achievement**, emphasizes the

primary role of school boards in South Carolina – to assure high academic achievement

for all students in a cooperative relationship with their communities. The SC School Boards Association provides training, information and other services to assist board members with their duties. The publications, **So you want to run for the school board** and **The role and responsibility of a school board member**, are

available from SCSBA for those interested in finding out more about school board service. Board candidate information is also found on www.scsba.org. For more information, contact Ellen Henderson, 1-800-326-3679 or ellenhh@bellsouth.net.

