



Council News

Civic Engagement at Work for Public Education

It's SIC Election and Member Reporting Time!

Has your SIC held its annual member elections for 2024-25? The statutory deadline for election of parent and teacher SIC members (and students, in the case of high schools) is October 15 each year.

As part of the SIC elections process, solicit nominations (people can self-nominate or nominate others), asking for brief bios on nominees and why they would like to be elected to your SIC. Include these bios (and a picture if possible) on your ballot materials. Elections can be conducted by paper ballot sent home with students, at open houses, during PTA/PTO meetings, and at faculty meetings.

Remember that parents are to elect other parents, teachers elect fellow teachers, and students elect their peers to serve on the SIC. Make sure to advertise both the nominations process and elections in your school newsletter, on your school marquee, the school's website, and by any other means you believe will maximize participation.

Need some assistance or ideas in how to conduct your SIC member nominations and elections? See our ["SIC Elections Toolkit"](#) available online at <https://sc-sic.org>.



All SICs are also reminded that the statutory deadline for reporting local SIC membership information to the SC-SIC office through the online SC-SIC Member Network is November 15 annually.

If they have not already done so, Member Network account users (Principals or their designees) will need to [reactivate their accounts](#) for the current school year. Directions for this are

available on the Member Network page accessible through the [SC-SIC website](#), or by contacting SC-SIC by email at sic@mailbox.sc.edu.

If your school is a new or re-organized school not listed in the SC-SIC Member Network, please contact the SC-SIC office for assistance you in getting your SIC established in the database.

Reporting your local SIC members through the Member Network is not only an accountability requirement of state law but assists the SC-SIC office by providing the data needed to contact SIC members throughout the year.

So please remember to hold your SIC member elections by October 15 and to report your SIC membership for 2024-25 to the SC-SIC Member Network by November 15!

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Council News is an award-winning publication of the SC School Improvement Council. Circulation 20,000+. Comments, questions, and articles are welcome. Contact Tom F. Hudson, Executive Director, at:

SC-SIC, USC College of Education, Suite 001
820 Main Street, Columbia, SC 29208
By phone: 803.777.7658
By email: sic@mailbox.sc.edu
website: sc-sic.org

From the Executive Director



A new school year brings the opportunity for new beginnings – for students and families, educators, and for School Improvement Councils. It brings new opportunities for me as well.

After 17 years with SC-SIC, the time has come for me to turn the page to a new professional chapter. I am enthused to begin work in September as Executive Director for The SC Education Association. While this move is a wonderful opportunity to continue to

be of service to South Carolina schools and teachers, the decision to make it was not an easy one. My time with SC-SIC and our local SICs across the state has been deeply rewarding and filled with so many experiences that have impacted me professionally and personally.

When I first took on this role, I was driven by a passion to make a difference in the lives of school communities and those they serve. Over the last two decades – as an SIC District Contact, a member of the SC-SIC Board of Trustees, on the SC-SIC staff, and the last 10 years as Executive Director – I have had the privilege of working with an incredible group of dedicated folks at various levels who have shared SC-SIC’s vision of “civic engagement at work for public education,” and who have tirelessly worked to bring that vision into focus.

Together, we have navigated challenges, celebrated milestones, and, I believe, made a lasting impact for our students, families, and schools through the efforts of nearly 1,200 SICs and over 11,000 members. I am deeply proud of what we have accomplished so that all voices might be heard in supporting and strengthening our schools. The relationships I have built with colleagues and stakeholders have been invaluable, and I will truly cherish the memories of our collaboration.

Looking back, I am grateful for the trust and encouragement I have received through the years from the USC College of Education, our SC-SIC Board of Trustees, co-workers, district and school leaders, local SIC members, my family – indeed, everyone involved in this noble journey. I am most confident that SC-SIC is in a strong position to continue thriving under new leadership. And while it is bittersweet to say “farewell,” I look forward to seeing how the next chapter unfolds for this organization and our state’s School Improvement Councils.

I am eager to see the new ideas and innovations that will emerge to drive SC-SIC’s efforts and impact forward, and I shall remain a supporter and advocate for the essential roles it plays for so many.

Thank you and be well.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom".

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Apply for the 2025 Riley Award for SIC Excellence

Did your School Improvement Council do some outstanding work during the 2023–24 school year? Has it undertaken projects and goals that have made an impact on the life of your school community? Then the SC-SIC Dick and Tunky Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence might have your name on it in 2025 – but only if you submit your award application by Wednesday, December 11!

The annual three-part Riley Award process is designed to identify outstanding SICs across the state (at schools open for at least one year), share the good news about their work, and recognize the many great things SICs are doing for their school communities. Named for former U.S. Education Secretary and SC Governor Dick Riley and his late wife, Tunky, the Riley Award reflects the couple's commitment to education and support of parent/community involvement in South Carolina's schools.

The awards process levels are:

- **Level One:** SICs tell the story of their accomplishments in the previous school year through a case statement. Level One applications count for a maximum of 100 points. SICs scoring at least 85 points at this level will be entered on the SIC Honor Roll with up to 20 of Honor Roll SICs selected as semi-finalists to compete in Level Two.
- **Level Two:** SICs are asked to submit additional documentation showing that their Council is following state law and SC-SIC guidelines. These submissions are worth a maximum of 50 points. The SICs with the five (5) highest combined point totals from Levels One and Two will be named to the Winners Level.
- **Winners Level:** Applications and submission materials from the five (5) finalist SICs are reviewed by an independent panel of outside judges which will choose the Riley Award winner. The remaining finalists will receive Honorable Mention awards.

In addition to the opportunity for your SIC to be recognized for outstanding work, the Riley Award judging panel (members of the SC-SIC State Board of Trustees) provides useful feedback on all applications reviewed – a great learning tool for SICs.

The online Level One application and instructions for the 2025 Riley Award will be available soon at <https://sc-sic.org>. Also available online are the submitted case statements of previous Riley Award honorees so that you can get an idea of what these SICs have accomplished and shared to garner themselves the distinction that the Riley Award provides.

So, apply for the 2025 Riley Award for SIC Excellence by Wednesday, December 11 and give your SIC an opportunity to shine!



Harold C. Johnson Elementary School (York School District 1) Winner, 2024 Dick & Tunky Riley Award for SIC Excellence

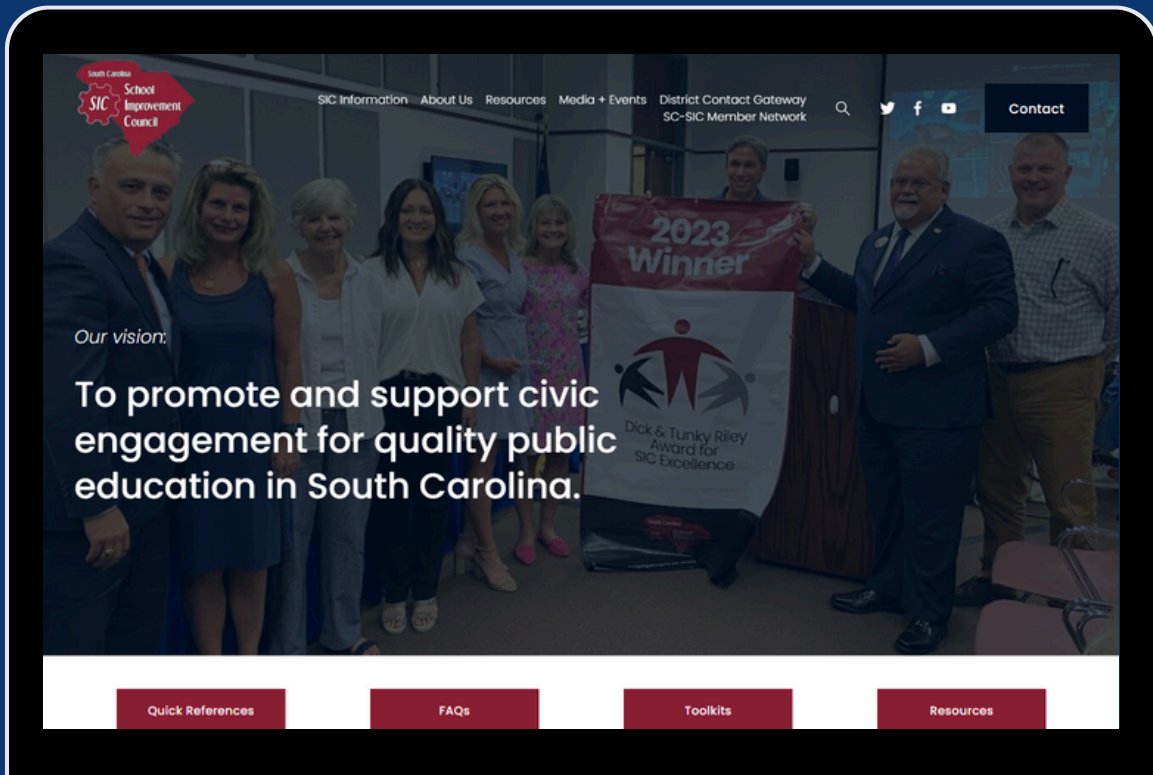
(L-R) SC-SIC Board of Trustees Chair Stewart Cooner; SC-SIC Executive Director Tom F. Hudson; Harold C. Johnson Elementary SIC Chair Julie Shillinglaw, Principal Crystal Sandifer, and SIC Secretary Clarissa Fowler; York School District 1 Superintendent Kelly Cox; Ted Riley, award presenter, son of Dick and Tunky Riley; and York 1 School Board Chair Scott Childers.

2024 Riley Award Honorable Mention SICs: Lake Forest Elementary SIC (Greenville County Schools); Lemira Elementary SIC (Sumter School District); Sterling School SIC (Greenville County Schools); Stratford High SIC (Berkeley County School District).

Questions?

Questions regarding the application process may be directed to SC-SIC Associate Director Karen Utter at utter@email.sc.edu or by calling the SC-SIC office, 1-800-868-2232.

New SC-SIC Website



Have a question? Looking for ideas?

Have you checked out our website?

For a virtual cornucopia of information and resources pertaining to School Improvement Councils, visit us online at <https://sc-sic.org!>

SIC Training Available Now In-Person or Virtually for 2024-25

For your School Improvement Councils to feel particularly informed and involved in their duties, they need to have a good idea what those duties entail. SIC training - whether conducted in-person or virtually - is an effective means to give SIC members useful tools and insights into their responsibilities. And now is as good a time as any to schedule training sessions for your SIC members!



“SIC Basics” is primarily intended for new School Improvement Council members but is also a good refresher for longer-serving members. Participants receive an overview of state legislative mandates regarding SICs, membership requirements, elections/appointments, reporting, and SC-SIC support and resources. These sessions also explore the primary roles and responsibilities of SICs and their members in working collaboratively to identify, set, and achieve goals to assist their local schools.

As local SICs change a portion of their membership each year, it is a good practice for SIC members to be exposed to training conducted by SC-SIC staff. While normally scheduled on a district-wide basis, individualized training for local SICs may be arranged on a case-by-case basis. (These sessions can be scheduled as in-person or virtual offerings.) Additionally, three 20-minute video segments on basic SIC responsibilities can be viewed on the [SC-SIC website](#) and can be incorporated as a part of local SIC meetings.

While “Basics” training is important for new SIC members, more advanced training, such as “SIC Leadership” can be helpful to more seasoned SIC members. “SIC Leadership” offers helpful tips to SIC Officers and Principals in planning and running productive meetings, activating SICs and committees to perform vital work for their schools; and steps to identify and recruit SIC committee members and candidates for election or appointment to their SIC.

If your SIC members have not already attended one of these sessions, get in touch with your SIC District Contact or the SC-SIC office to schedule one. Contact your SIC District Contact or reach out the SC-SIC office at 1-800-868-2232 or sic@mailbox.sc.edu.

We look forward to hearing from you and being with you virtually or in-person for an “SIC Basics” or “SIC Leadership” training soon!

**“Ask yourself if what you’re
doing today is getting you
closer to where you want to be
tomorrow.”**

Anonymous

Key Dates for School Improvement Councils, 2024–2025

Early Fall 2024	Schedule “SIC Basics” training
October 15, 2024	Conclude local SIC Member elections
November 15, 2024	Conclude local SIC Officer elections; deadline for reporting local SIC membership for 24–25 to online SC–SIC Member Network
December 11, 2024	Application deadline for 2025 “Riley Award for SIC Excellence”
Winter 2025	Schedule “SIC Leadership” training
Spring 2025	2025 SC–SIC Annual Awards Event
April 30, 2025	Deadline for preparing and disseminating 24–25 <i>SIC Report to the Parents</i>
June 1, 2025	Deadline for uploading 24–25 <i>SIC Report to the Parents</i> to the SC–SIC Member Network
Early Summer 2025	SC <i>School Report Card</i> narrative submitted to the SC Department of Education



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