

## Chukker Creek Elementary 2007 Riley Award Winner!

More than 300 school improvement council members from across the state looked on as the Chukker Creek Elementary SIC was named the winner of the 2007 Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award. Former US Secretary of Education Richard Riley and Mrs. Riley presented the award at a special awards luncheon during the annual SIC conference in Columbia on March 10.



*Chukker Creek's Anne Witebsky, Beth O'Rear, Laura Paxton and daughter Katie enjoy a "Riley Award moment"!*

In presenting the award Secretary Riley said, "Tunky and I are honored to have this award named for us. Nothing pleases us more than to recognize the contributions made by citizens to their local schools."

Mrs. Riley added, "I served on one of the very first SICs in the state. It is amazing and gratifying to see how far they have come and all they have been able to accomplish."

The winning SIC, which is located in the Consolidated District of Aiken County, won the award by implementing a variety of programs designed to make Chukker Creek a better school. Student achievement increased for 95% of the students participating in a reading program made possible by

*(continued)*

*See "Chukker Creek Wins Riley Award"  
pg. 4*

## 2007 Riley Award Honorable Mentions

### **Bradley Elementary School, Richland School District One, Columbia**

The Bradley Parent Resource Room provides a place for student tutoring and access to information on topics like anger and stress management and how to help with homework. Their new telephone tree system makes communication easier.

### **Pineview Elementary School, Lexington School District Two, West Columbia**

All 500 Pineview students participated in a walking program and the community turned out for a Walk a Child to School event. Their BUG program recognizes children who are Being Unusually Good, and rewards were given for classes with low absentee rates.

### **Taylor's Elementary School, Greenville County School District, Taylors**

The Taylor's SIC became very concerned when the school failed to make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) under the No Child Left Behind law simply because of student attendance rates. The SIC developed a comprehensive plan that significantly reduced absences and tardies, which increased valuable instruction time.

### **Wade Hampton High School, Greenville County School District, Greenville**

This busy SIC implemented new programs focused on student achievement, assisting teachers, enhancing community relations and improving the school climate. A mentoring program produced a 51% increase in the number of at-risk students who passed the ninth grade.

## Donna Tinsley Named SIC Advocate of the Year

The SC-SIC Board of Trustees presented the SIC Advocate of the Year Award to Donna Tinsley during a special awards luncheon in Columbia on March 10.



*SC-SIC board member Carlos Primus presents a beaming Donna Tinsley with the SIC Advocate of the Year Award*

Mrs. Tinsley has followed her two daughters through the Richland Two school system serving as a SIC member continuously for the past 14 years.

During her years of service Mrs. Tinsley has chaired three different councils: Lonnie B. Nelson Elementary, E.L. Wright Middle,

*(continued)*

*See "Tinsley Awarded Advocate of the Year"  
pg. 5*

## *In This Issue...*

- Director's Message . . . . .pg. 2
- Access General Assembly .pg. 2
- Riley Award Winners . . . . .pg. 3
- Lincoln Live! . . . . .pg. 4
- SIC Action Timeline . . . . .pg. 5
- Bulletin Board . . . . .pg. 6



## Message from . . . the Executive Director

At the annual conference I announced my retirement from the university and as director of SC School Improvement Council, effective June 30, 2007.

When I joined the staff the Education Improvement Act had just passed. There was excitement and anxiety over the new three-year plan, school effectiveness and involving parents. That was 1985. I had not a clue about what councils were but did know that involving stakeholders in public education had exciting potential in South Carolina.

Over the past 22 years the role of councils has expanded and their responsibilities extended. Councils now advise on curriculum issues, promote strategies to involve families, and advocate for increased funding. Members advise their superintendent, serve on state boards and task forces, and participate as presenters for state and regional conferences.

I leave with a sense of accomplishment and gratitude for others who shared the work. Just like school improvement councils, the work of this office was done by many: Tom, Mary, Jimmy, Diane, Vincent, Angela, Weldon, and most recently Claudia, Diane and Cassie. And like councils, the work of this office will continue in other capable hands.

The next phase of my life will be built on the friendships made and opportunities experienced while working to engage parents, educators, students and community members to improve public education in our state. Thank you for the memories.

*Jean M. Norman*



### Easy Access to Your SC General Assembly!

School improvement council members are encouraged to be aware of what's happening at the South Carolina Statehouse, but most of us find it difficult to keep up with all the proposed legislation, committee meetings and floor debates. The South Carolina legislature provides a great tool that will keep you up-to-date with daily activities at the statehouse – [www.scstatehouse.net](http://www.scstatehouse.net).

If you haven't visited the South Carolina Legislature Online recently, you will be pleasantly surprised with the many new features you can access. Wish you could attend a floor debate in the House? You can watch the action in real-time from your computer! If there is specific legislation that you want to follow, you can create a personalized tracking list that sends meeting notices and changes to bills during each step of the legislative process directly to your computer.

There is a brochure available on the site that explains the entire legislative process in detail, complete with definitions of terms such as "germaneness," "sine die," and "non-concurrence", along with a full list of the various motions that can be employed during deliberations in the General Assembly. Do you know the many steps a bill must take to become a law in South Carolina? You'll find a helpful chart in this brochure.

Don't know who your senator and representatives are? All you need to do is click on the Citizen's Interest tab on the website and enter your zip code to locate your legislators. You will also find complete information on all the legislators and the various committees and subcommittees they serve on.

Each of us needs to be an active participant in our government. Fortunately, we in South Carolina have legislative information at our fingertips!

*Council News - Spring 2007*



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# BE A WINNER



**Chukker Creek Elementary SIC** wins the 2007 Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award. L-R Dick Riley, Amy Gregory, Anne Witebsky, principal Peggy Trivelas, Beth O'Rear, SIC Chair Laura Paxton, Katie Paxton, and Tunky Riley

## Honorable Mentions



**Wade Hampton High:** Karen Moyd, Tunky Riley, Dick Riley, principal Lance Radford, Nancy Walker, SIC Chair Rick Sumerel



**Pineview Elementary:** Kim Parker, SIC Chair Jennifer Broughton, Tunky Riley, Dick Riley, principal Jim Hinton, and Shrenda Pelfrey



**Taylor's Elementary:** Nina Morgan, Cheryl Marshall, principal Vaughan Overman, Tunky Riley, Dick Riley, Jim Watkins, Melodie White



**Bradley Elementary:** Leo Jones, Linda Byrum, principal Dr. Erica Fields, Tunky Riley, Dick Riley, Kashmir Imani, SIC Chair Jacquelyn Stewart, Wanda Moore, Wilma McQueen, Racquel Dobbs

# “Lincoln Live!” at SIC Annual Conference

In a skillful interpretive portrayal of US President Abraham Lincoln, Dr. Gene Griessman, author of *The Words Lincoln Lived By*, shared his Success Principles with attendees of the annual SIC Conference held March 10 in Columbia. In the wise and introspective style that characterized the 16th President, Griessman said he considered an idea "by taking it up by the roots and looking at it from all sorts of ways." He believes that he has gained wisdom by following that process.

#1 - Learn to learn. Read for general knowledge and to learn about a lot of things. That will help you engage a variety of people and learn from them. Listen to others rather than thinking about what you want to say. You can anticipate others' arguments and practice your responses in order to make your points unmistakable: "this is what I did when I debated Stephen Douglas - and won the debate!"

#2 - Learn to use diversity. Create a "team of rivals" by looking for people who are different from you. The interaction of divergent people broadens what can be done and helps solve problems in a more creative way. "I even had people on my cabinet who didn't like me, but they knew things I didn't," according to Lincoln.

#3 - Don't let depression or disappointment defeat you. Lincoln suffered from depression but learned not to brood over the slights and disrespect he endured. He surrounded himself with optimistic people who didn't dwell on failure. Lincoln encouraged people to involve themselves in activities bigger than themselves, "such as improving your school." He said he learned to tell jokes and discovered laughter was the best medicine to defeat depression.

In the second half of the program, Dr. Griessman returned to the stage as himself to share the insights he has gained about success and leadership. Interest in finding out what made people successful prompted him to pursue one-on-one interviews with the leaders of our time, including Ronald Reagan, Ted Turner, Ray Charles, Mary Kay, Aaron Copeland, Helen Gurley Brown, Hank Aaron, and others from the arts, business, science, sports, and political arenas. He learned that

"success has its own rules" no matter what field of endeavor. Being well funded and recognized is important, as is valuing the people involved, but communication is the vital key to success.

First, speak from the heart. Show people your sincerity. When putting across your position, think about how it will benefit them. An atmosphere of goodwill is created when people realize that there are fewer differences than they thought.

Second, make eye contact. When addressing a group or making a presentation, talk first to one person, then another person, and then to another person. "When talking to one, we talk to everyone, but when we talk to all, we talk to nobody."

Next, have some interaction with your audience. If you are having a dialogue or a question and answer session, answer honestly and directly. Save a reminiscence or story to close the discussion; remember, Lincoln was a master storyteller!

Plan for the other person's argument and think about how you would respond - even practice your responses. In a public discussion, restate the other position to check for accuracy - later on your opponent can't say you didn't understand! Remember, he said, that you are participating in an argument - not a quarrel. Avoid dredging up negative personal feelings. Arguing is about ideas, not personalities.

Finally, describe your idea or plan in plain English. Let people "see" what you want them to understand. Use what they know and build upon it to persuade others to accept your position.

Dr. Griessman encouraged SIC members to dream with a quote from Rudyard Kipling's poem "If": "develop the will power to make it happen." Speaking as President Lincoln, he reminded his audience that "the will to succeed" is the most essential requirement for achieving success.

- Jean Norman

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## “Chukker Creek Wins Riley Award”

(continued from pg. 1)

the SIC. The SIC scheduled work days to clear away environmental hazards on the campus and improve the landscaping. Other initiatives headed by the SIC addressed health and safety issues, which resulted in improved student nutrition and physical activity. The Chukker Creek SIC also participated in a variety of activities to increase parent and community involvement for the greater school community including participation on a district-wide SIC – the first of its kind!

When accepting the award from Secretary and Mrs. Riley, Peggy Trivelas, principal of Chukker Creek stated, “I know that our SIC will use this award as an incentive to continue examining our school and implementing model programs to improve our school for all students.”

Laura Paxton, a parent who chairs the SIC added, “This is an amazing group of parents, teachers, administrators, and community members all working together. None of us could do this work alone. We had everyone on board and that made all the difference.”

Four School Improvement Councils received Honorable Mention for the Riley Award (see Box page 1): Bradley Elementary SIC, Richland School District One, Columbia; Pineview Elementary SIC, Lexington School District Two, West Columbia; and two SICs from the Greenville County School District, Taylors Elementary and Wade Hampton High.

SC-SIC Board Chair, Nell Stewart of Greenville said, “We are so proud of all the winners. Each of them makes a unique contribution to public education in their local communities.”

-Cassie Barber

# SIC Success Stories

Continuing the theme of leadership, four School Improvement Councils were spotlighted at the SIC Annual Conference. Topics included getting organized to function effectively, building community support, encouraging parent involvement, and creating relationships with community partners and school districts. Here are their stories.

## Camden Elementary School, Kershaw County

Brian Hann described SIC efforts to “get something done” and how they recognized the need to focus on goals and targets they could achieve. The council wrote bylaws to help determine what needed to be done from year to year and identified strategies that helped them learn what SICs were supposed to do. Videos on the SC-SIC website were a valuable resource. The council reviewed the school mission and the priority actions of the SACS plan. They then championed three of the priorities and organized committees around them. The committees reported regularly on the progress they were making with their priority. “We are now poised to take on a wide variety of tasks,” said Hann.

## Martha Dendy Sixth Grade Center/Bell Street Middle School, Laurens 56

David O’Shields described how their SIC listened to parents and joined with them to gain support for a universal breakfast for their students. They also partnered with a local grocery store in the GEM Project – Greet, Eat and Meet – which allowed parents to shop and meet with teachers at the same time, thereby increasing parent involvement. A reward system designed by the SIC to improve student conduct compensated students for positive behavior with “Bell Bucks”, which could be exchanged for various goods. “We were able to motivate students and they learned about the economic system as well,” according to O’Shields.

## A.J. Lewis Greenview Elementary School, Richland 1

SC-SIC Board member and former SIC Chair Carlos Primus outlined the action plan developed around the realistic goals visualized by their SIC. The council created the “No Parents Left Behind” program and insured its success with a series of PACT workshops designed to teach parents about testing strategies and how they could help their children. Men were invited into the school to help and to learn through DADS – “Dads Are Doing Something”. And, recognizing that a large number of children were being raised by grandparents, the SIC organized and conducted a health fair which has now grown into a community event. Primus summarized their success: “having a plan and working it has been effective for us.”

## Aiken County

Newly elected district Board member and SC-SIC Board member Ray Fleming described the collaboration of a community non-profit, Public Education Partners, and the Aiken County school district. Thirty-nine of the forty schools’ SICs attended a “mini-conference”, sharing their stories and making connections. Culinary arts students prepared food, volunteers facilitated small group discussions, and 150 participants learned about getting different groups to work together, working with principals, and how to sustain interest. “Our intent was to energize SICs across the district and I think we made a good start,” said Fleming.

## SIC Action Timeline



### April

- Complete the Report to the Parents and distribute by April 30. Visit the SC-SIC website for tips and sample reports - from the Home page click on “Parent Involvement” and scroll to the bottom of the page.
- Committees gather and analyze information about improvement goals.
- Make plans for SIC elections (some SICs hold elections in the fall).

### May

- Work with principal to draft narrative for the School Report Card.
- Compile progress reports about each school improvement plan strategy.
- Conduct elections of new SIC members (optional).
- Identify and recruit community members to serve on the SIC next year.

### June

- Complete Report Card narrative with the principal.
- Submit recommendations for update of the school improvement plan.
- Elect officers and assign committees if elections were held in the spring.
- Establish study groups to work over the summer to analyze information from the Report Card, the survey results for parents, teachers, and students and/or the recommendations from the ERT (if applicable).



and Spring Valley High School. She directed the application for the Riley Award for the E.L. Wright SIC and was rewarded when that application won Honorable Mention in 2003. She prompted the SC-SIC office to create a certificate of appreciation for council members that you can find on the SC-SIC website today.

In her professional life Mrs. Tinsley is the executive secretary to the SC House Education Committee. She was a key player in the passage of a joint resolution by the South Carolina General Assembly that publicly honored the work of school improvement council members on their 25th anniversary in 2003. Mrs. Tinsley is a steady and persistent public school advocate who has worked to improve her children’s schools through leadership on school improvement councils and also through her professional life.



## Accepting Nominations for SC-SIC Board

If you are reading this newsletter, chances are you are a vital member of your local school community - someone who makes much needed contributions in

a variety of ways. You value public education and you are willing to work to improve it.

The SC-SIC Board of Trustees is looking for people like you to serve on our statewide board. If you have demonstrated a commitment to public education in your own particular sphere of influence, consider nominating yourself for election to the SC-SIC Board of Trustees. If you know someone else that fits the bill, consider nominating that person. Send a resume and letter of interest to Jeff Nicholson, Membership Committee Chair, via email (preferred) at [jeffn@cetlink.net](mailto:jeffn@cetlink.net). Letters sent via US mail should be addressed to Jeff Nicholson, 4462 McConnells Hwy, Rock Hill, SC 29732. All nominations must be made with the nominee's knowledge.

The SC-SIC Board works to maintain diversity in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and geography. Nominations must be received by July 1, 2007 in order to be considered for terms beginning in the 2007 – 2008 school year. Appointments are made by the board chairperson during the year to fill unexpired terms as needed. For more information please call Mr. Nicholson at 803-329-3571 or Associate Director Cassie Barber in the SC-SIC office at 800-868-2232.

## Riley Award Winners Featured on Speaking of Schools

On Monday, June 4 at 6:30 p.m., ETV Radio will broadcast Speaking of Schools, the weekly program focused on education in the Palmetto State. The winner of the SIC Riley Award, Chukker Creek Elementary School, will star along with the four Honorable Mentions: Bradley Elementary, Pineview Elementary, Taylors Elementary, and Wade Hampton High.

During the half-hour show, host Doug Keel will interview members from each SIC as they share their stories with listeners.

## New SC-SIC Website Coming Soon!

Those of you visiting the SC-SIC website have probably noticed that it hasn't been updated in the past few months. That's because we have been diligently working on a project to bring you a new, easier-to-use website in the coming weeks. The new site, [www.sic.sc.gov](http://www.sic.sc.gov), will bring you everything you've been used to with the old website, but with more convenient navigation and a more modern look.

Please continue to visit and use our current website, [www.ed.sc.edu/sic](http://www.ed.sc.edu/sic). Unfortunately, we are not able to update it any longer, so you won't see the latest news, but all the valuable information and links you have used in the past are still readily accessible. When the new site goes live, you will see a link on the home page of the current site that will take you to the new and improved SC-SIC website... coming soon!

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