SC School Improvement Council

The "Basics" for Effective SICs

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What Is An SIC?

- **Broad-based community advisory body**
- **Focused on goals to improve the school**
- **Required in each K-12 public school by law**

**Parents • Teachers • Community Members
Students • Administrators • School Leaders**

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SICs in South Carolina

Established in state law over 45 years ago

1977 (Education Finance Act)
1984 (Education Improvement Act)
1993 (Early Childhood Act)
1998 (Education Accountability Act)
2014 (Read to Succeed Act)

Over 1,100 SICs with nearly 12,000 members

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What Are SICs Intended To Do?

1 Provide input and feedback on school strategic improvement plans and updates

2 Assist the school in implementing various improvement activities

3 Monitor and report on school progress toward improvement goals

"Civic Engagement at Work for Public Education"

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Why SICs?

Research shows family/community engagement in schools lays the groundwork for:

- ✓ Student achievement
- ✓ Post-secondary school success
- ✓ Improved student behavior
- ✓ Stronger school-home relations
- ✓ Increased support of educators

SICs provide additional insight, unique perspective, and vital assistance

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Types of SIC Members

Elected ➡ *(staggered two-year terms)*
- Parents
- Teachers
- Students (Grades 9-12)

Appointed ➡ *(terms set in local bylaws)*
- Community Members

Ex-Officio ➡ *(by virtue of position)*
- Principal
- Others (AP, PTA/PTO Member, Parent Liaison)

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Holding SIC Elections

Parents Elect Parents — Use methods that are fair and have high levels of participation – piggyback on other school events (Open House, etc.)

Teacher Elect Teachers — Nominations and elections are typically held during faculty meetings

Students Elect Students — Hold as part of student government elections with a line item on the ballot

REMEMBER: Elections must be held annually by **October 15**
See *SIC Elections Toolkit* for info @ **sc-sic.org**

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SIC Appointments

Community Members are appointed by the Principal

Intended to be individuals who cannot serve on an SIC in any other way

✓ **Bring resources and ideas**
✓ **Lend expertise and perspective**
✓ **Help build broader community support**
✓ **Come from a variety of backgrounds**

See *SIC Handbook* for info @ **sc-sic.org**

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Minimum SIC Size

Elementary and Middle Schools

Elected		Appointed	Ex-Officio
Parents	Teachers	Community Members	Principal

High Schools (Grades 9-12)

Elected			Appointed	Ex-Officio
Parents	Teachers	Students	Community Members	Principal

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Maximum SIC Size?

Statute does not limit SIC size

SICs should reflect the size and diversity of their schools, but not be so large to become unwieldy

Not everyone helping the SIC needs to be a member

Anyone interested can attend SIC meetings, serve on SIC committees, or help with SIC initiatives

REMEMBER: Membership info is reported annually by November 15
https://www.sc-sic.org/member-network

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Getting Your SIC Started

Elect SIC Officers

Chair ● Vice Chair ● Secretary
Note: No Treasurer

Set Meeting Schedule

At least eight (8) meetings per year
Consider needs of all members when selecting days and times

Provide Materials

SIC Handbook
Current SIC Bylaws
School Improvement Plan

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So What Does An Effective SIC Meeting Look Like?

✓ **The SIC Chair runs the meeting**
✓ **Approval of prior meeting's minutes**
✓ **Update from the Principal**
✓ **Committee reports**
✓ **Work session and/or guest speakers**
✓ **Look toward "next steps"**
✓ **All SIC members are actively engaged**

See *Toolkit for Effective SIC Meetings @ sc-sic.org*

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SIC Leader Roles for Meetings

Chair — Develops agenda with the Principal
Ensures meeting notices and materials are circulated in advance of the meeting
Runs meeting and coordinates discussion

Vice Chair — Assists and acts in absence of the Chair

Secretary — Takes notes, distributes minutes, and maintains SIC records

Principal — Provides reports and other information

See *SIC Handbook* for full duties and info @ sc-sic.org

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SICs and the FOIA

SICs are considered "public bodies" as defined by the SC Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

All SIC meetings are open to the public

Meeting Schedules and Agendas are publicly posted

SIC records are open – Agendas, Minutes, Bylaws, Reports, Election Results, Membership

SIC records are kept on file

SC Code of Laws, 1976 (as revised), Title 30, Chapter 4

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Developing SIC Bylaws

Bylaws are an SIC's agreed upon policies and procedures

Keep Bylaws handy and updated

Review them every few years – over time, practice can stray from policy

See *SIC Bylaws Toolkit* for info @ sc-sic.org

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"Ask yourself if what you're doing today is getting you closer to where you want to be tomorrow."

Anonymous

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Effective SIC Action Steps

Use data to learn more about your school's needs and strengths

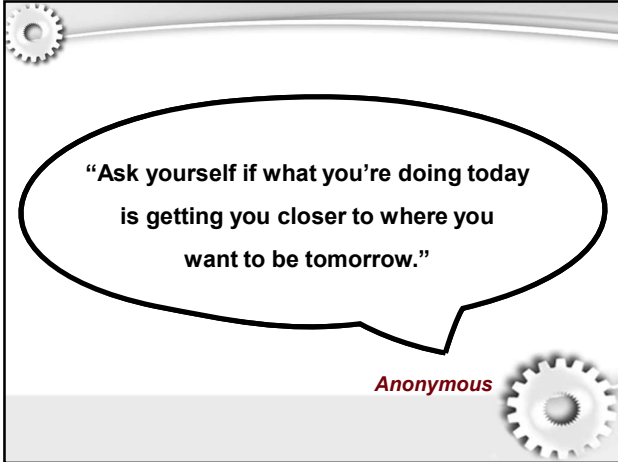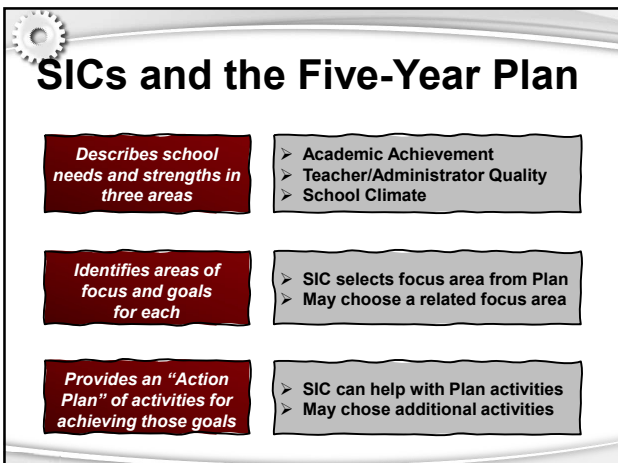Work collaboratively to identify SIC focus area(s)

Set one or more specific SIC goals that can be effectively measured

Select one or more activities targeting the SIC goal(s)

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SICs and the Five-Year Plan

Describes school needs and strengths in three areas	➢ Academic Achievement ➢ Teacher/Administrator Quality ➢ School Climate
Identifies areas of focus and goals for each	➢ SIC selects focus area from Plan ➢ May choose a related focus area
Provides an "Action Plan" of activities for achieving those goals	➢ SIC can help with Plan activities ➢ May chose additional activities

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SICs Use Committees for Work

Formed around areas of focus and goals

Do research, tend to details and logistics, and prepare recommendations for the full SIC

Report on work regularly to the full SIC

Committee members do not have to be SIC members

Recommended standing committees for ongoing work such as Member Recruitment and Publicity/Advocacy

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Reporting on SIC Work

SIC prepares (by April 30) the *SIC Report to the Parents* outlining progress for the current year

Needs ● Goals ● Actions ● Results
See examples online @ sc-sic.org

With the Principal, SIC helps prepare the annual narrative for the *SC School Report Card*

Describes the school and notes goals, while highlighting challenges and successes for the year

Be sure to tell the story of the school that statistics alone can't tell

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RTP Award of Merit

SICs can be recognized for the quality of their annual *Reports to the Parents*

2023 Winner
SIC Report to the Parents
Annual Award of Merit

Spartanburg High SIC
(Spartanburg School District Seven)

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Riley Award for SIC Excellence

Presented annually by SC-SIC to recognize outstanding and effective local SIC efforts

SICs submit application for review by the SC-SIC Board of Trustees by December 8, 2023

Winner announced each spring

2024 Riley Award application online soon

Application, criteria, and timeline available @ sc-sic.org

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2023 Riley Award Honorees

WINNER

Hilton Head Island High SIC
(Beaufort County School District)

Honorable Mentions

Belvedere Elementary SIC
(Aiken County Public School District)

Jennie Moore Elementary SIC
(Charleston County School District)

Greer High SIC
(Greenville County Schools)

Wilder Elementary SIC
(Sumter School District)

2023 finalist case statements available @ sc-sic.org

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SC-SIC Vision and Mission

VISION

"To promote and support civic engagement for quality public education in South Carolina."

MISSION

"SC-SIC facilitates meaningful parental and community involvement in our state's public schools by providing resources, tools, and strategies to local School Improvement Councils and other stakeholder groups."

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SC-SIC Services

- ✓ Website (*sc-sic.org*) with free downloadable materials, resources, and other information
- ✓ Electronic newsletter (*Council News*) and periodic email updates for SIC members
- ✓ Social Media – Facebook and Twitter
- ✓ Variety of training opportunities statewide
- ✓ Technical assistance via phone and email
- ✓ SC Education Policy Fellowship Program (SC-EPFP)
- ✓ Carolina Family Engagement Center (CFEC)

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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Meade, Anthropologist

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Contact Information

SC School Improvement Council

"Civic Engagement at Work for Public Education"

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