



*“Civic engagement in public education.”*

## **Tips for Creating or Updating School Improvement Council Bylaws**

### **When Does An SIC Need to Create New Bylaws?**

There are three circumstances in which an SIC needs to create and approve a new set of bylaws:

- When a new SIC is convening at a new school;
- When an SIC at an existing school never adopted bylaws; or
- When an SIC cannot locate its existing bylaws after a reasonable search.

There are two ways that an SIC can go about creating a set of bylaws:

Option 1: An SIC can choose to write its own bylaws from scratch. SICs that choose this option must submit the final version of their bylaws to the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) office for review before the bylaws take effect. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the bylaws do not contain any provisions that conflict with state law and/or guidelines developed by SC-SIC.

At a minimum, an SIC's bylaws should address the following: SIC Purpose; Membership; Elections and Appointments; Terms of Office; Officers and their duties; Meetings; Voting; and Procedures for Amending the Bylaws.

Option 2: The second (and recommended) option is to review, modify, and adopt the *Sample SIC Bylaws*. This option is less time consuming and prior SC-SIC review is not required before the bylaws take effect.

### **Where Can An SIC Find the *Sample SIC Bylaws*?**

SICs can find the *Sample SIC Bylaws* on the SC-SIC website at [sic.sc.gov](http://sic.sc.gov). Because state law requirements are slightly different for schools serving grades 9 and above, SC-SIC has developed two versions of the *Sample Bylaws*: one for elementary and middle

school SICs and one for SICs at high schools or other schools that include grade 9 or above.

For SICs that desire additional guidance when modifying the *Sample Bylaws* for their use, SC-SIC has created a *Guide for Adapting the Sample SIC Bylaws*. The *Guide* identifies language that can be modified, explains the reasoning underlying the sample language, and offers discussion questions that SICs can use to explore the issues associated with modifications to the sample language.

## **How Often Does An SIC Need to Update Its Bylaws?**

### **1. When changes in state law impact SICs**

Each time the General Assembly passes a new law that changes or adds rules that SICs must follow in organizing and operating their Councils, SICs need to update their bylaws accordingly. SC-SIC will notify local SICs when these changes occur and will provide sample language that SICs can use to update their bylaws to meet the new requirements.

### **2. When an SIC wants to change its current practices**

If an SIC wishes to change any practices that are not governed by state law but are covered by its bylaws, or if it has already changed such practices, the SIC will need to update its bylaws to reflect these changes.

In any event, it is a good practice for SICs to review their bylaws once every several years to make sure that its practices match its bylaw requirements, and to evaluate whether there are any changes or improvements that the SIC would like to make. SICs may want to convene a temporary committee to review their bylaws in depth, draft suggested language, and make recommendations to the full SIC.

## **How Can SICs Obtain Additional Assistance?**

SC-SIC staff are available to review and provide feedback on SIC draft bylaws regardless of whether review is required. SICs can request assistance by calling or emailing the SC-SIC office.