



## iCivics and the SC Supreme Court Class Action Program



**Representative Bakari Sellers talks with iCivics students at the South Carolina Supreme Court during a field experience to the Capitol Complex.**

*Learning-by-doing is generally considered the most effective way to learn.*

---Marilyn M. Lombardi

Middle school students enrolled in **iCivics** exploratory classes learn-by-doing during a daylong experience at the Capitol Complex in Columbia.

The SC Supreme Court's Class Action Program is designed to bring middle school and high school students to the Supreme Court to hear oral argument. Afterwards, the Court meets with the students for approximately 30 minutes to talk about law-related issues of interest and to answer questions. The Justices do not, however, discuss cases pending before the Court.

The students also have an opportunity to interact with the lawyers arguing the case.

All participating teachers will be sent a packet of materials prior to their scheduled visit. This packet includes information about the Court, a synopsis of the case that will be heard in oral argument and other law-related information. A Supreme Court staff attorney and clerk for Justice Beatty visited the classroom to prepare students for their visit to the Court. The young lawyers reviewed the protocol for a court visit, and helped students brainstorm for the question and answer session with the Justices, in order to get the most out of this opportunity.

In the fall, students were excited to

### iCivics Vendor Table

The **iCivics** vendor table at a conference is an effective way to share the **iCivics** website and resources with many educators. **iCivics South** and the Young Lawyers Division of the SC Bar have had vendor tables at the SC Bar Convention, the South Carolina



Social Studies Council Fall Conference, and the SC Middle Schools Conference. This spring and summer look for the **iCivics** booth at the South Carolina Book Festival May 18-20, the Upstate Technology Conference June 13-14, and the South Carolina Business Summit June 24-27.

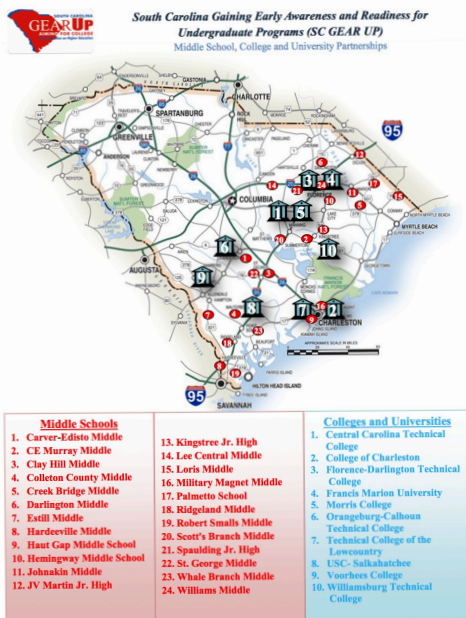
meet with Representative Bakari Sellers from Orangeburg. Representative Sellers led the students on a tour of the State

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House, guided them in a mock debate on the floor of the House, and discussed the importance of students learning to be active participants in their communities and state. As one of the youngest elected state legislators in the country the students were inspired by his commitment to public service.

Participation in this extension of **iCivics** has real-world relevance that allows students to see professionals in practice. Preparing for and participating in the Class Action Program is a powerful learning-by-doing opportunity for students and an important partnership for **iCivics** in South Carolina.

If you have any additional questions about these programs, please contact Betsy Goodale at (803) 734-1160 or [bgoodale@sccourts.org](mailto:bgoodale@sccourts.org) or Betsy Stevenson at (803) 734-1080 or [bstevenson@sccourts.org](mailto:bstevenson@sccourts.org).



## iCivics South and SC GEAR UP

The **iCivics** partnership with the SC GEAR UP program continues to expand. Now fully staffed in 24 schools (15 school districts), the GEAR UP program is in full swing. In January, training for the 15 new graduation coaches was provided by the SC GEAR UP administrative staff and the **iCivics South** Director, Dr. Jane Brailsford. Dr. Brailsford will be working with the graduation coaches and the schools' administrators to introduce **iCivics** into the core curriculum.

### July 2011-March 2012 **iCivics South** by the numbers

**165** South Carolina teachers trained to use **iCivics** in their classes.

**100** schools in **32** South Carolina school districts introduced to **iCivics**.

**724** South Carolina students participated in **iCivics** summer camp, 8-day May programs, middle school exploratory/related arts and 10th grade elective courses.

**10** presentations given at professional association/civic organization meetings.

## SOUTH CAROLINA MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS OFFER FULL-TIME ICIVICS COURSES FOR 2012-2013

Beginning in the fall semester of 2012 seven middle schools in Lexington School District One and one middle school in Aiken County School District will offer daily instruction in **iCivics**. Courses will be nine-week or semester-long related arts/exploratory electives for students in grades 6, 7, and 8. There will be full-time **iCivics** teachers at Gilbert Middle, Pelion Middle, Pleasant Hill Middle, Carolina Springs Middle, White Knoll Middle, Lexington Middle, and Meadow Glenn Middle School in Lexington One. A.L. Corbett Middle School in Aiken County plans to use the iCivics persuasive writing unit as



the cornerstone of an exploratory course.

Three high schools will offer **iCivics** a required Social Studies elective course in the fall. Approved by the South Carolina Department of Education **iCivics** is one unit of credit that can be offered as a semester-long or full-year course. Students at Clinton High School in Laurens School District 56 are enrolling for **iCivics** as well as students at White Knoll High School and Gilbert High School in Lexington County School District One.

The middle school and high school courses were designed by Dr. Jane Brailsford, Mr. Howard Bissell, Mr. Bill Allman, and Mrs. Miriam Matthews. For more information and free training contact Dr. Jane Brailsford, [icivicsc@gmail.com](mailto:icivicsc@gmail.com)

### WHAT COMMUNITY LEADERS ARE SAYING -

"I thought the meeting was most productive. We all left feeling pride in our country and encouraged by Jane Brailsford's presentation and work for the students. Gene Trayer, retired ship captain in the Navy was particularly grateful for her work with the students of today."

Member, Lexington County Retired Educators' Association

### WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING -

To see what students are saying click the link below to view a short video.  
[livepage.apple.com](http://livepage.apple.com)

### WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING --

"I just wanted to take the time and thank you for bringing such a wonderful program to Stratford and providing us with training. It is great for Government and Economics and we all use it. Students from CP2 to AP find it great fun and an excellent learning tool. This week one of our resource teachers told me how excited her students were about it and wanted to do the "Do I have a Right" in their spare time. Again, thanks for providing us with a tool our students want to use even on their own time. "

Teacher, Berkeley County Schools



## *Civic Education: The Fundamental Mission of Public Schools*

*Jane Brailsford*

Across our state and nation there are few requirements in place for K-12 civic education. In fact twenty-three states have no civic education requirement whatsoever, yet school district mission statements often include statements that graduates will be "prepared as leaders and citizens of our democracy." Although South Carolina academic standards for civic education are insufficient, students and teachers in elementary, middle and high schools are reinvigorating civic learning inside and outside the classroom with iCivics.org.

The Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) and End-Course Examination Program (ECOCEP) high stakes testing programs focus on achievement in English language arts, writing, and mathematics. Therefore, the dilemma for teachers and administrators is to provide opportunities for students to practice democratic processes throughout their school experiences while improving ratings on the School Report Card. A unique web-based project, iCivics.org aims to make civic learning relevant and exciting for students and teachers. Retired Justice Sandra Day O'Connor recognized that computer games would ignite and inspire learning about civic concepts and skills. The result is iCivics.org a web-based resource that includes free lesson plans, online games, and interactive instructional tools.

South Carolina has truly embraced iCivics. South Carolina's iCivics program at Gilbert Middle School was one of the first pilot programs in the nation, which now has spread to over forty states. Chief Justice Jean H. Toal received the National Center for State Courts' (NCSC) Sandra Day O'Connor Award for the Advancement of Civics Education during a ceremony over the summer for her role in bringing civics education to South Carolina students. Moreover, with support from the District Court of South Carolina Library Fund, Dr. Jane Brailsford, a former teacher and administrator, was hired to expand civics education in our state through the use of iCivics. Formally, the iCivics program in South Carolina is known as iCivics South, L.L.C., and a website, [www.iCivicsSouth.org](http://www.iCivicsSouth.org), is currently under construction to provide even more resources to South Carolina educators, students, and parents. Dr. Brailsford already has spoken to multiple community associations and trained educators in many counties across the state. Dr. Brailsford also recently became an in-kind partner with the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, which received a \$22.7 million grant to provide direct services to twenty-four middle schools along the I-95 corridor, to give those students the academic skills and support they need to prepare for, enter, and succeed in postsecondary education.

South Carolina teachers and administrators are participating in iCivics professional development, developing courses for middle school and high school students, creating summer programs to promote civic education and community leadership, and supporting extra-curricular civic education clubs. By embedding iCivics in the school program teachers and school leaders are creating the opportunity for students to practice democratic processes. Our public schools were founded to educate children to become citizens; we must not forget that fundamental purpose.

For more information or to arrange free iCivics training contact Dr. Jane C. Brailsford, iCivics South, L.L.C., [icivicsso@gmail.com](mailto:icivicsso@gmail.com)



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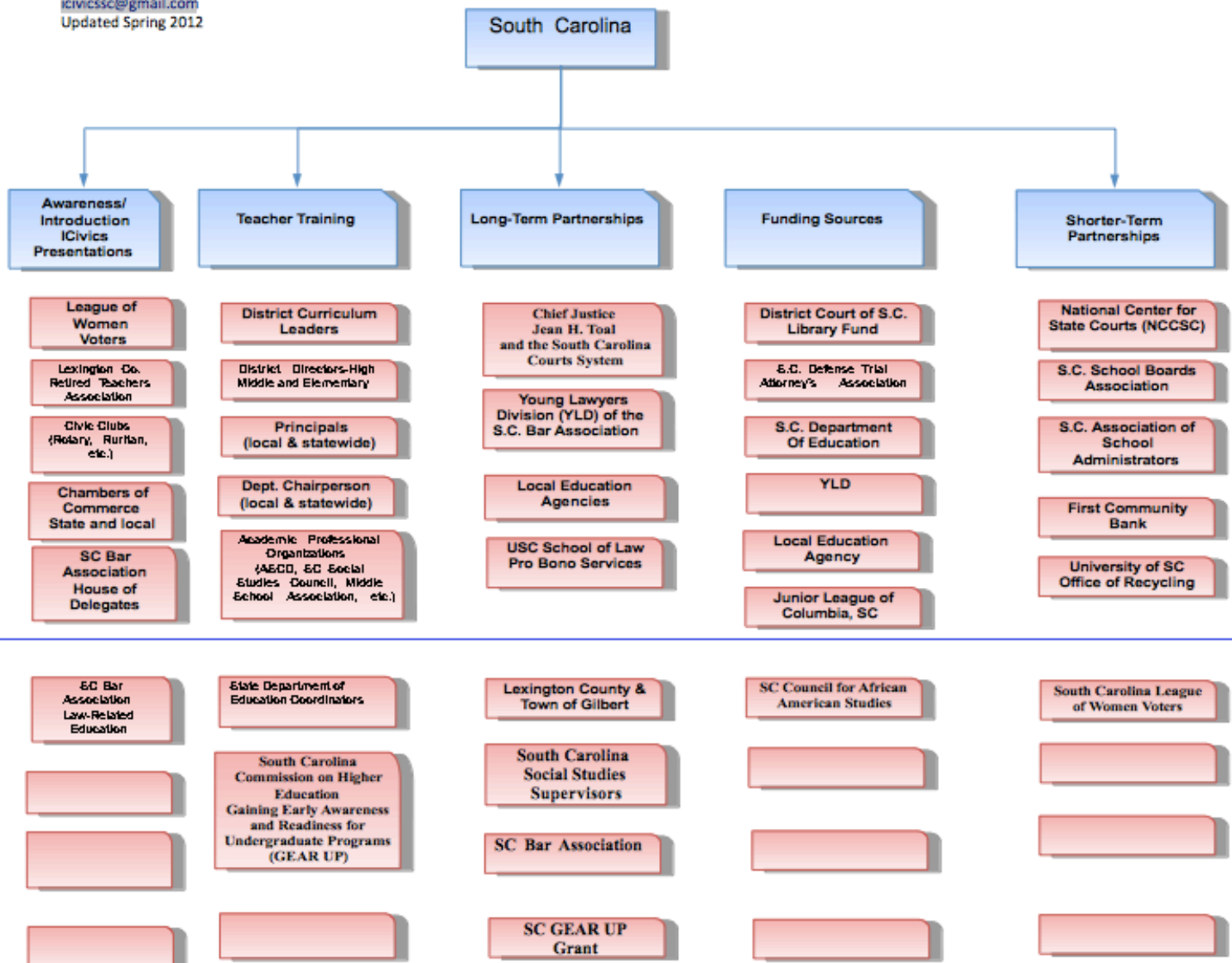


## iCivics South Spring Calendar

DATE	Training/Events/Meetings
February 1	Lexington 1--Planning curriculum for May 2 week program and district-wide iCivics Summer Leadership Camp
February 8	iCivics South, YLD, LRE and SC Bar Executive Director discussions for future collaboration
February 10	Planning meeting for 2012 district-wide middle school iCivics curriculum implementation in Lexington 1
February 11-15	National Council for Community & Education Partnership Conference/GEAR UP
February 17	iCivics Training--Berkeley County School District
February 20	iCivics Training--Horry County School District
February 22	Gilbert Middle School--planning for May two week experience and district-wide iCivics Summer Camp
February 23	YLD--planning for May iCivics Blitz in elementary schools
February 23-24	South Carolina Civil Rights Conference--iCivics presentation
February 29-March 3	South Carolina Middle Schools Conference--iCivics presentation and vendor table
March 8	Lexington County Retired Educators Association--iCivics presentation
March 9	Lexington County School District One--planning for 2012-2013 implementation of iCivics in 7 middle schools
March 13	Berkeley County Schools--meeting to brainstorm opportunities for full-time iCivics implementation
March 14	YLD monthly iCivics committee meeting
March 16	iCivics Training--Laurens School District 55
March 19	iCivics Training--A.L. Corbett Middle School Aiken County School District
March 22	SC GEAR UP staff meeting at SC Chamber of Commerce
March 22	iCivics Training--Beaufort County Schools
March 31	iCivics Training--Charleston County Schools
April 2	SC Bar video taping at Gilbert Middle School (prep for SC Supreme Court Class Action Program)
April 4	Middle school students on-site field experience SC Capitol Complex
April 11	iCivics Training--J.V. Martin Middle School
April 26	SC GEAR UP staff meeting at SC Commission on Higher Education

### iCivics South Spring/Summer Events

- ★Extensive curriculum review/update for middle school exploratory courses and 10th grade elective
- ★Pee Dee iCivics Summer Symposium
- ★Upstate Technology Conference (UTC)--iCivics presentation and vendor booth
- ★iCivics training--Oconee County Schools
- ★South Carolina Business Education Summit--iCivics presentation and vendor booth
- ★Revise/update online professional development course



For more information and free professional development contact:

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