



Legislative Update Week 7 ***February 25th, 2023***



Pictured above from left to right: [Senator John L. Scott Jr.](#); The SCEA President, Sherry East

House Ways and Means Approves Budget

On Thursday, the House Ways and Means Committee approved their budget plan (2023-2024 appropriations bill, H.4300) which will next be debated on the House floor and then on to the Senate.

The state minimum salary schedule for teachers would be increased by \$2,500, meaning most teachers would see a \$2,500 raise. Beginning the 2023-2024 school year, the state's starting salary for teachers would be \$42,500. The state's technical colleges would receive over \$98,000,000 to be used for technical updates, training facilities, and program implementations.

You can view the document [here](#).

School Safety and Targeted Violence

The Joint K-12 Subcommittee & Public Safety Subcommittee of the House

Education and Public Works Committee heard bill [H.3360 Center for School Safety and Targeted Violence](#) on Tuesday. This bill establishes the center within the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) to produce extensive training, education, and expertise in school safety and targeted violence.

The bill comes as the number of threats directed at schools has increased significantly each year. The SCEA testified in favor of the bill and supports any legislation that protects educators, staff, and students from harm.

The bill received a favorable report.

School Psychologists Certification

The SCEA also spoke in favor of [H.3308 School Psychologists](#), a bill that will give temporary certifications to school psychologists, social workers, and guidance counselors that are certified in another state until they can become certified in South Carolina.

The bill received a favorable report.

Sunscreen in Schools

Currently, in many schools across the state, students are not allowed to have sunscreen unless they have a prescription, parents' permission, and it is included in a student's Individual Health Plan (IHP). [S.256](#) seeks to change this policy and make sunscreen and sun protective clothing more accessible to students.

Specialists, parents, and students have all pressed to the legislature the importance of allowing sunscreen in schools, as skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. A person's risk for melanoma can more than double after only five sunburns, so preventing sunburns in children and adolescents is an important part of protecting student health.

The bill was reported favorably as amended by the full Senate Education committee.

Aspiring Educator Scholarships

[S.125: Scholarship Stipend](#) would encourage students to pursue a career in education by providing scholarships for aspiring teachers to lessen their student debt burden while receiving their degree.

The bill was reported favorably as amended by the full Senate Education committee.

Fire Drills

Currently, the state code includes two different and conflicting codes for emergency drills in public schools, such as fire, active shooter, and severe

weather drills. Many educators have argued that these drills are excessive and cause significant disruptions to instructional time.

[S.203: Public School Drills](#) would remove conflicting language to unify each school district's drill policy. This will lessen classroom disruptions due to drills while still ensuring students are prepared for emergency situations.

To see the new proposed drill requirements for schools, click [here](#).

Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act

At the House Business and Commerce subcommittee meeting on Tuesday, legislators discussed [H.3726: Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act](#). This bill aims to consolidate workforce development entities and streamline the development process by creating the Office of Statewide Workforce Development Coordination within SCDEW, which would oversee publicly funded workforce development services.

The bill was given a favorable report. The SCEA will continue to monitor this bill.

To read the full bill click [here](#).

Vouchers

Legislators continued to debate vouchers this week.

[“Providing Academic Choice in Education” \(PACE\) \(S.285\)](#) is a voucher scheme that will use tax credits to indirectly fund private and religious institutions that could discriminate against students.

This bill was heard by the full Senate Education committee on Tuesday.

The committee debated the language of the bill, specifically the different names to refer to qualifying students and their definitions.

[PACE \(S.285\)](#) is preferred by some legislators because it does not take any money from the general fund. However, although money will not be taken from the general fund, there will be a large amount of money that no longer goes into the general fund. The bill was given a favorable report.

The other voucher scheme bill, [“Scholarship Trust Fund Bill” \(S.39\)](#), did not see any movement from committees this week.

The SCEA will continue to provide updates as these bills move through the legislature.

[Take Action On Vouchers!](#)

Ballot Initiative

[H.3591](#): This joint resolution seeks to amend the South Carolina Constitution so

that public tax dollars can go directly to private schools. The bill was originally scheduled for debate on the House floor, but debate was postponed until February 28—which means there's still time to contact your Representatives and tell them to oppose this voucher scheme.

To see the potential ballot question: click [here](#).

Censorship

[H.3728](#): the “South Carolina Transparency and Integrity in Education Act,” saw no movement last week, but remains on The SCEA’s radar. This censorship bill would limit discussions of race, gender, and other important issues in K-12 and higher education classrooms, making it difficult for many teachers to accurately teach their subjects and restricting educators’ ability to respect, reflect, and protect all students in their classrooms.

Additionally, this bill requires schools to share curricula with parents and create a complaint form that parents, other students, and school employees can use to challenge lessons or curriculum components they believe violates this law.

The SCEA fears that many educators may become burdened with unnecessary complaints and fears for the future of accurate education in Black history and other cultural topics.

Express opposition to H.3728.

TAKE ACTION NOW TO STAND UP FOR TRUTH!

Lobby Day

Join The SCEA, educators, and other that support public education in South Carolina for Lobby Day on March 8.

The SCEA Lobby Day will begin at 9 a.m. in room 110 of the Blatt Building on the State Grounds with registration and networking at 9:30 a.m. Following registration, The SCEA will provide a legislative briefing before we dismiss participants to talk to legislators.

[RSVP here \(space is limited\)](#)

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force Listening Tour

Members of the South Carolina Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force will kick off a statewide series of listening sessions with educators in Greenville on Monday. The session will be held from 6-8 p.m. at Greenville County Schools’ MT Anderson Support Center (100 Blassingame Road, Greenville).

Educators will be given the opportunity to share their perspective on issues that

impact their profession, particularly in relation to entering and staying in the classroom.

Other dates include:

March 13: 4:30-6:30 p.m. Francis Marion University (Chapman Auditorium). Alumni Drive, Florence.

March 20: 4:30-6:30 p.m. Blatt Building, Room 110. 1105 Pendleton St., Columbia.

Upcoming Meetings of Interest

Below are meetings scheduled for next week on bills of interest to you. You can click on the date link to view the agenda and the bill number to see the legislation.

Tue 2/28 in Blatt Room 403

H 3726 (Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act)

Tue 2/28 10:00 AM in Blatt Room 433

H 3295 (Education: Competency-based Education); **H 3308** (School Psychologists); **H 3360** (Center for School Safety and Targeted Violence); **H 3843** (Open Enrollment)

Wed 3/1 9:30 AM in Gressette Room 307

S 126 (Charter School Accountability Act)

Thu 3/2 9:30 AM in Gressette Room 408

S 227 (National Board Certified Teachers)

Introductions of Interest

Below are bills that were introduced in the House and Senate this week that may be of interest to you. We have provided a brief description as well as a link to the full text of each bill.

S. 556: Military Temporary Remote School Enrollment Act (Fanning)

Senator Mike Fanning (D-Fairfield) introduced a bill to enact the "Military Temporary Remote School Enrollment Act" to deem students compliant with residency requirements for school attendance if a parent or legal guardian is transferred or is pending transfer to a military installation in the state while on active duty. Districts would be required to accept enrollment applications and course registrations for such students. The bill sets forth further procedures for these military families.

The bill was referred to the Senate Education Committee.

S. 552: Teacher Paid Family Leave (Massey)

Senator Shane Massey (R-Edgefield) and Senator Tom Young (R-Aiken) introduced a bill to grant state public school teachers paid parental leave for six weeks of paid leave at 100% of base pay or two weeks of paid leave at 100% of base pay. The bill was referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

H. 4016: Athletic Skills Trainers (Hiott)

Representative David Hiott (R-Pickens) and Representative Jackie Hayes (D-Dillon) introduced a bill to prohibit an athletic skills trainer from individually or on behalf of any entity to recruit, unduly influence, entice, pressure or use direct or indirect communications that would cause a student athlete to transfer to the sports team of another school. It would also authorize the High School League to develop a program for individuals to be designated as a certified athletic skills trainer.

The bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

H. 4023: First Steps (Jones)

Representative Stewart Jones (R-Laurens), Representative Shannon Erickson (R-Beaufort), Representative Pat Henegan (D-Marlboro) and others introduced a bill to modify the election process of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness local partnership. The board must maintain no more than 25 elected members. Members who miss more than three consecutive meetings without excuse would be considered terminated from membership and a vacancy would be created.

When any membership vacancy occurs, the vacancy would be filled with a person from the same category and in the same manner of election or appointment as the vacated member.

The bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

Numbers to Know

- **8:** Number of historically black colleges and universities in the state
- **5th:** South Carolina's homicide ranking in the U.S.
- **\$2,500:** Proposed pay increase for public school teachers
- **25:** Number of states in the U.S. that do not require a permit to carry a gun
- **526:** Average Covid-19 cases reported per day in the state last week
- **0.6%:** Increase in food prices in South Carolina since beginning of 2023

Education Bills That Moved This Week

[Click here to follow all tracked bills](#)

HJR3591: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT (SMITH, JR. G)

- *Current Status:* 2/23/2023 - Debate adjourned until Tues. 2-28-23 ([House Journal-page 28](#))
- *News Stories:*
 - 12/28/2022 - [Funding of religious schools, abortion access: SC legislation to watch for in 2023 session](#)

HB3582: DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION (GARVIN K)

- *Current Status:* 2/23/2023 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Jefferson

SB256: SUNSCREEN AT SCHOOL (JOHNSON M)

- *Current Status:* 2/23/2023 - Scrivener's error corrected

SB245: BOOSTER CLUBS (KIMBRELL J)

- *Current Status:* 2/22/2023 - Committee report Senate Education: Favorable with amendment

SB203: PUBLIC SCHOOL DRILLS (FANNING M)

- *Current Status:* 2/22/2023 - Committee report Senate Education: Favorable with amendment

HB3360: CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY AND TARGETED VIOLENCE (POPE T)

- *Current Status:* 2/28/2023 - House Education and Public Works (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)

SB124: NONCERTIFIED TEACHER PILOT PROGRAM (HEMBREE G)

- *Current Status:* 2/22/2023 - Committee report Senate Education: Favorable

SB125: SCHOLARSHIP STIPEND (HEMBREE G)

- *Current Status:* 2/22/2023 - Committee report Senate Education: Favorable with amendment

SB285: PROVIDING ACADEMIC CHOICE IN EDUCATION (PACE) (DAVIS T)

- *Current Status:* 2/22/2023 - Committee report Senate Finance: Favorable with amendment

- *News Stories:*
 - 2/22/2023 - [Bill helping parents pay for private tuition through tax credits advances in SC Senate](#)

SJR123: FIRST STEPS (HEMBREE G)

- *Current Status:* 2/22/2023 - Committee report Senate Education: Favorable

HB3309 SEIZURE SAFE SCHOOLS ACT (GILLIAM L)

- *Current Status:* 2/21/2023 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Erickson, Bradley

In The News

[South Carolina Senate OKs "Shield law" for lethal injections](#)

The South Carolina Senate passed on Wednesday a law shielding the identity of pharmaceutical companies providing lethal injection drugs for state executions.
WISTV

[S.C. lawmakers push bond reform to address "revolving door"](#)

Advancing to the House floor for debate is a bill designed to crack down on offenders who commit violent crimes while out on bond in South Carolina.
WISTV

[Legislation to create a \\$3.6 million school safety center advances](#)

A House Education panel advances legislation Tuesday aimed at boosting school safety and putting a psychologist in every South Carolina School.
WLTX 19

[Bill helping parents pay for private tuition through tax credits advances in SC Senate](#)

A bill allowing up to \$55 million in tax credits to help parents pay for private K-12 tuition is advancing in the South Carolina Senate, potentially setting up two ways for families to use taxpayer help to leave public schools.
The Post & Courier

[Bill would block local laws on e-cigarettes, vapes from being enforced in S.C.](#)

A bill advancing at the State House would ban South Carolina cities and counties from enacting their own local restrictions on e-cigarette and vape sales.
WISTV

[Open-enrollment bill would allow students to attend any public school across S.C.](#)

In most school districts in South Carolina, students only have one option for which public school they attend: the one for which they are zoned, based on where they live.
WISTV

Should people pay to move to SC? One lawmaker thinks so

Between 2010 and 2020 about 400,000 people moved to South Carolina, according to U.S. Census data. Neighboring states like North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida are among the states sending the most people.

WLTN 19

SC horse industry needs help. Is legalizing gambling the right bet?

In the 1970s and '80s, Frank "Gore" Smith had to turn horses away from his stables in rural Orangeburg County. There just wasn't room.

The Post & Courier

Nephron Pharmaceuticals furloughs SC workers after recent troubles

Nephron Pharmaceuticals is furloughing an unspecified number of employees as a result of what the company called a "business need."

The State

Junior staffer caught \$3.5B error; SC comptroller struggles under questioning

The state's top accountant gave muddled and meandering testimony Feb. 16 about his office's \$3.5 billion financial reporting blunder before an investigating panel that was left with more questions than answers.

The Post & Courier

S.C. House bill would offer in-state college tuition for students from North Carolina, Georgia

A bill in the South Carolina House of Representatives would allow schools to offer in-state tuition to "students who legally reside in a state that borders South Carolina and otherwise meet admissions criteria."

Yahoo

South Carolina House passes abortion ban; no sign of budging

For the second time since the U.S. Supreme Court ended federal abortion protections, the South Carolina House has passed a near-total abortion ban and shows no sign of budging.

Associated Press

Bill banning "Carolina Squat" passes South Carolina Senate

It also passed with an amendment stating that only tickets would be issued as penalties for the first 180 days after the bill takes effect, a suggestion that was made by Myrtle Beach Police Chief Amy Prock last month.

WISTV

