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Legislative Update Week 14
April 15th, 2023



The SCEA President Sherry East, center, meets with House Speaker Pro Tempore Tommy Pope, left, and The SCEA lobbyist John Brisini, right.

This week, The House took its last week of furlough and will return Tuesday. Meanwhile, Senators focused their efforts on passing bond reform legislation. Senators adjourned early on Thursday.

Next week, the Senate will discuss the budget on the floor. More discussion is expected on a few high-priority bills including the constitutional carry measure, censorship, hate crimes, medical marijuana, and proposed abortion bans.

Legislators continue to push to get as many bills passed as possible over the next few weeks.

Things To Know from This Week

Censorship

This week, the [Senate Education Committee](#) considered and approved [H.3728](#), (Transparency and Integrity in Education Act). During committee debate, legislators emphasized that students need to be taught certain history lessons for exposure and background of what happened in the past.

This censorship bill could limit discussions of race, gender, and other important issues in K-12 and higher education classrooms. It could also make it difficult for educators to accurately teach their subject areas, and restrict their ability to respect, reflect, and protect all students.

The current version of the bill prohibits parents from suing a school district for alleged teaching violations.

During committee discussion, lawmakers from both parties stressed they want students to get a full and accurate picture when covering slavery, Jim Crow segregation laws and the Holocaust. They also claimed the purpose of the bill is to encourage transparent and factual school lessons on complex history. Read more [here](#).

The bill now advances to the Senate floor for debate.

Please click [here](#) to submit written opposition to censorship. If you have already submitted elsewhere, please consider resubmitting here. Submitting via the form will help ensure that your thoughts land on senators' desks, and not ignored in their inboxes.

Work Experience Credit for New Teachers

Senators advanced [S.305](#) on Wednesday, which would encourage more people with professional experience to take teaching jobs in a related field.

Public school teachers in South Carolina have a minimum salary schedule, which is based on education and experience in the classroom.

This bill would allow work experience in a field related to the subject they would be teaching to count toward what they would need to move up the pay scale, as long as they have at least five years' experience within 10 years of beginning teaching.

This bill received a favorable report from the Senate Education Committee and will now move to the Senate floor for debate. Please send any feedback on this bill to The SCEA President Sherry East at seast@thescea.org.

Read more [here](#).

Things to Watch for Next Week

The House E.P.W K-12 Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday to discuss both [H.4280](#) and [S.256](#).

[H.4280 Educator Assistance Act](#) ([Rep. Shannon Erickson](#)) would provide professional certificates issued by the State Board of Education to be permanent unless revoked or suspended. These certificates would not need to be renewed.

This bill would also allow teachers to get out of their contract for up to 10 days following the posting of the district salary schedule.

[S.256 Sunscreen In Schools](#) (Senators [Johnson](#) and [Grooms](#)) this bill will allow students to use and possess certain sunscreens in schools.

[Visit The SCEA Action Center!](#)

Numbers to Know

- **800,000**: Number of South Carolinians employed by a small business
- **33**: Number of public institutions of higher education in South Carolina
- **416**: Number of infant deaths throughout the state in 2021
- **7**: Number of prisons closed by the SC Department of Corrections in recent years
- **146**: Number of mass shootings in the U.S since the beginning of 2023

Education Bills That Moved This Week

[To follow all education bills that moved this week click here.](#)

SB305: WORK EXPERIENCE CREDIT FOR NEW TEACHERS (YOUNG, JR. T)

- *Current Status*: 4/13/2023 - STATEWIDE SECOND READING BILLS
- *State Bill Page*: [SB305](#)
- *News Stories*:
 - 4/13/2023 - [Work experience outside the classroom could help new teachers earn more in SC](#)

HB4300: FY2023-2024 APPROPRIATIONS (BANNISTER B)

- *Current Status*: 4/13/2023 - Committee Amendment Adopted
- *State Bill Page*: [HB4300](#)
- *News Stories*:
 - 4/5/2023 - [State worker raises planned in South Carolina Senate budget](#)
 - 4/5/2023 - [Want to watch TikTok dances? Access to the app could be banned from SC school devices](#)
 - 3/20/2023 - [SC teachers, state employees could see a \\$2,500 pay increase called "revolutionary"](#)
 - 3/15/2023 - [SC House's \\$13.8B budget debate slowed by Republican battle](#)
 - 3/15/2023 - [Lawmakers push for comptroller general's salary reduced to \\$1 after \\$3.5 billion mistake](#)
 - 3/14/2023 - [SC House votes to reduce Comptroller General's salary to \\$1](#)
 - 3/14/2023 - [Editorial: SC budget plan finally delivers \\$50K starting pay, but not for teachers](#)
 - 2/28/2023 - [SC House budget pushes economic development, investments in people; includes tuition freeze](#)
 - 2/27/2023 - [SC House budget pushes economic development, investments in people; includes tuition freeze](#)

SB39: EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND (GROOMS L)

- *Current Status:* 4/18/2023 - SECOND READING STATEWIDE UNCONTESTED BILLS
 - *State Bill Page:* [SB39](#)
-

Bills That Saw No Movement, but We Continue to Monitor

Budget

The [Senate Finance Committee](#) has approved a \$13 billion budget for the next fiscal year. This budget would increase the minimum teacher salary for every position and experience level.

Specifically, the plan would raise the statewide starting salary for teachers by \$2,500, up to \$42,500. The minimum pay for each step on the teacher pay schedule — based on a teacher’s experience and education — would also increase by \$2,500.

Districts already paying above the new minimums could decide if they want to spend their additional money on further raises or elsewhere.

It is important to note that this is NOT a raise of \$2,5000 for all teachers, but instead, an increase to the minimum teacher salary schedule, which does not guarantee a uniform statewide raise to all teachers. Teachers will instead receive differing raises, based on the district in which they work.

Currently eight districts pay at the minimum salary schedule (\$40,000). They include Cherokee, Dillon 3, Dillon 4, Florence 2, Hampton, Lee, Sumter, and Williamsburg. In addition, Edgefield (\$40,007) and Abbeville (\$40,040) are just over the minimum.

Full Senate debate begins this week.

Academic Choice in Education (ACE)

[S.285](#) would strengthen a program currently in place, by encouraging companies or institutions to fund scholarships for students to attend private schools. Donors would receive state tax credits with a \$10,000 limit.

The SCEA is against any legislation that will use funding in the interest of private schools, that can discriminate against our children, while our public schools are suffering.

The bill remained in committee this week.

Encourage Your Representative to vote NO on Vouchers!

Gender Identity

[S.627](#) pertains to mostly to medical care; however, it also includes three significant education-related provisions:

- Prohibits school personnel to “encourage or coerce a minor to withhold from the minor’s parent or legal guardian the fact that the minor’s perception of his or her gender is inconsistent with his or her sex.”
- Prohibits school personnel from withholding from a minor’s “parent or guardian information related to the minor’s perception that his or her gender is inconsistent with his or her sex.”
- Requires school personnel to report to a parent or legal guardian if they “suspect or know that a student suffers from gender dysphoria, gender identity disorder, or other psychological conditions that can result in a person identifying with a gender different than that of their sex.”

The SCEA fears this legislation will strip students of their privacy and prevent a safe environment for them to communicate with their educators freely.

This bill also did not see any movement last week, but The SCEA will continue to monitor.

Take Action to Protect the Confidentiality of Educators!

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 4/18 in Blatt Room 433

[S.256](#) (Sunscreen at School); [H.4100](#) (Countywide School District Mandate);

[H.4280](#) (Educator Assistance Act)

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. Please review and let us know if you have any comments or concerns.

S.714: Fragile X Day (Bennett)

Senator Sean Bennett (R-Dorchester) and Senator Michael Gambrell (R-Anderson) introduced a concurrent resolution to recognize July 22, 2023 as "Fragile X Day" in South Carolina to raise awareness of the for individuals and families living with Fragile X (FXS), a genetic condition that causes intellectual disability, behavioral and learning challenges, and various physical characteristics, and is the most common inherited single gene cause of autism. The resolution was referred to the Senate Medical Affairs Committee.

S.729: ROTC Credits (Gambrell)

Senator Michael Gambrell (R-Anderson) introduced a bill that would permit the training in a military or naval ROTC program sponsored by one of the military services of the United States in the eighth grade shall satisfy the physical education credit required for high school graduation. The bill was referred to the Senate Education Committee.

