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*Legislative Update Week 17*  
*May 6th, 2023*



*The SCEA members (from left to right), Lisa Lucas, Terrell Brown, Senator Marjorie Bright-Matthews, Mary Rita Watson, Jean Read and President Sherry East at the Blue Palmetto Dinner.*

## Things To Know

### Educational Scholarship Trust Fund

Governor Henry McMaster signed voucher bill [S.39](#) into law on Thursday.

Starting with the 2024-2025 school year, eligible families will receive up to \$6,000 to send their child to a private school. The money could go towards tuition and/or

textbooks and other “eligible expenses.”

During the first phase, only 5,000 vouchers will be offered to eligible families. An eligible student must be a resident of the state, attend a public school, and have a household income that does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level.

In year two, 10,000 vouchers will be offered to eligible students in households making 300% or less of the poverty line. In year three, student eligibility will extend to any student living in a household making 400% or less of the poverty line (an amount equal to roughly \$120,000 for a family of four).

This voucher bill provides private schools with public tax dollars, which could be in violation of the state's constitution.

Learn more about how these types of vouchers harm public education [here](#).

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## **Educator Assistance Act**

If passed, [H.4280](#) would make certifications permanent unless revoked or suspended.

[The House Education and Public Works Committee](#) confirmed that their intention with this legislation is to take some of the burden from educators by eliminating the recertification requirement.

Currently, teachers must earn 120 hours of continuing education credits every five years to renew their teaching certificate and stay in the classroom. This bill would make certifications permanent unless revoked or suspended.

H.4280 would also allow teachers to get out of their contract for up to 10 days, following the posting of the district salary schedule. Currently, teachers must sign contracts by May 10th, which is often before the salary schedule is posted.

This bill also changes the way school districts and the state board deal with “breach of contracts.” Moreover, it streamlines the burden of data collection that is placed upon school districts.

The SCEA is in favor of this bill.

If you have contract questions, please contact our member help desk by emailing [help@thescea.org](mailto:help@thescea.org).

This bill received a third reading and will now be sent to the Senate for consideration. Click [here](#) to send a thank-you note to the House.

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## School Safety and Targeted Violence

[H.3360 "Center for School Safety and Targeted Violence"](#) establishes a center within the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) to provide extensive training, education, and expertise in school safety and targeted violence. This bill comes as a response to the increase in threats directed at schools and school employees.

H.3360 received a favorable report from the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee and will now move to the Full Senate Judiciary Committee for consideration.

The SCEA supports this bill. Please click [here](#) to contact the full [Senate Judiciary Committee](#) to pass along your support.

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## Things to Watch for Next Week

### Academic Choice in Education (ACE)

The Revenue Policy Legislative Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee met on Thursday and received testimony on [S.285](#) (ACE).

[S.285](#) is another voucher bill that would strengthen an existing program by providing a tax credit to companies or institutions that donate to private-school scholarship funds. Donors to these funds would receive up to \$10,000 in tax credits.

As with the other voucher measure, we feel that our state constitution is clear that public funds should not go to private schools. If South Carolina has money to send to private schools, then they have money to invest in public education.

The committee adjourned on Thursday and will return next week with an amendment to the bill.

**TELL THE HOUSE TO VOTE NO ON ACE!**

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## Censorship

[H.3728](#), the "Transparency and Integrity in Education Act", is a censorship bill that 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.

Supporters claim the purpose of the bill is to encourage transparent and factual school lessons on complex history; however, this bill is part of a national agenda to inject political censorship into classrooms.

The Senate began debate on [H.3728](#), but debate was interrupted. We expect that the Senate will resume debate on Tuesday. This will give the body one last opportunity to propose any amendments before a third reading.

Take action against censorship!

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## Paid Family Leave for School District Employees

[Representative Neal A. Collins](#) introduced this bill, which would provide paid parental leave upon the birth of a child or initial legal placement of a foster child for eligible school district employees.

Last year, the legislature passed a bill providing paid leave to state employees. However, that bill classified educators as "district employees," so teachers were not included. [H.3908](#) seeks to remedy that by ensuring teachers and other district employees receive the same benefits as other state employees.

Specifically, the bill would provide:

- Six weeks paid leave to an employee that gives birth or is "primarily responsible for furnishing the care and nature" of an adopted child.
- Two weeks paid leave for a parent that did "not give birth or at the start of a foster placement.

Under this bill, employees would NOT have to exhaust their sick/personal leave before becoming eligible for paid parental leave. Educators that are out on paid parental leave would have those days count toward the 152 days of work required

during a school year to be eligible for an additional year of experience on their certificate (and any corresponding step increase in salary).

[H.3908](#) (Paid Family Leave for Teachers) received a second reading with an amendment on Thursday. This bill will now return to the House, where they can concur or amend.

We expect the House to take this bill up next week.

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## Read To Succeed

[S.418 \(Read to Succeed\)](#) passed the House this week with a 107-0 vote.

Last week, the [House Education and Public Works Committee](#) significantly altered S.418 through use of what is called a “strike and insert” amendment. The amended version directs educators to use the “Science of Reading” approach.

The amendment also eliminates the “three-cueing” method of reading instruction (also called MSV), requires that third graders who cannot demonstrate reading proficiency be held back, and extends summer reading camps past third grade.

Furthermore, if this bill passes, the Read to Succeed required course work will be eliminated, which The SCEA has been a strong advocate for in the past.

This bill will now be returned to the [Senate](#), which will need to approve the amended version.

Please read the bill and provide feedback to President Sherry East at [seast@thescea.org](mailto:seast@thescea.org).

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## South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Seat Appointment

The Full [Senate Education Committee](#) will be considering Palmetto Promise Executive Director Oran P. Smith and former State Superintendent of Education Mick Zais for a seat appointment on the Commission on Higher Education Committee.

If you have concerns about these appointments, please contact the Committee.

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[Click Here to Contact the Committee!](#)

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[Visit The SCEA Action Center!](#)

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## Numbers to Know

**87:** Number of South Carolina Governors since 1778

**48:** Number of states with a hate crime law, which does not include South Carolina and Wyoming

**4:** Number of states that prohibit alcohol sales on Sunday

**170:** Number of boating accidents in SC in 2022

**3:** Number of legislative days remaining in the regular legislative session

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## Education Bills That Moved This Week

To Follow All Education Bills That Moved This Week Click Here.

### **SB39: EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND (GROOMS L)**

- Current Status: 5/4/2023 - SIGNED BY GOVERNOR
- News Stories: 4/27/2023 - [After years of fits and starts, a school voucher bill is headed to SC governor's desk](#)
- 4/24/2023 - [SC on cusp of giving parents money for private, non-zoned public schools. Who will benefit?](#)
- 4/5/2023 - [Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush advocates in South Carolina for school voucher bill](#)

### **SB418: READ TO SUCCEED ENDORSEMENTS (HEMBREE G)**

- Current Status: 5/4/2023 - Read third time and returned to Senate with amendments.

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

- Current Status: 5/4/2023 - Senate Subcommittee recommends passage Judiciary Subcommittee

**HB3908: PAID FAMILY LEAVE** (COLLINS N)

- Current Status: 5/4/2023 - Roll call Ayes-38 Nays-0
- News Stories: 4/6/2023 - [SC House OKs up to 6 weeks paid leave for K-12 teachers after having or adopting a child](#)
- 3/31/2023 - [SC could become 1st state in Southeast to guarantee teachers 6 weeks paid family leave](#)
- 3/30/2023 - [Will SC teachers get paid parental leave like state employees? Here's what's proposed](#)

**SB256: SUNSCREEN AT SCHOOL** (JOHNSON M)

- Current Status: 5/3/2023 - Read third time and enrolled

**HB4300: FY2023-2024 APPROPRIATIONS** (BANNISTER B)

- Current Status: 5/3/2023 - Debate adjourned until Tues., 5-9-23
- News Stories: 4/21/2023 - [\\$55M SC budget earmark would update Greenville's Lockheed Martin campus](#)
- 4/20/2023 - [One SC senator tried but failed to quash short-term rental limits in Charleston beach towns](#)
- 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](#)

**HB3728: TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY IN EDUCATION ACT** (FELDER R)

- Current Status: 5/2/2023 - Debate interrupted.
- News Stories: 4/13/2023 - [SC bill requiring "fact-based" school lessons on race has bipartisan support after changes](#)

**SB299: JOINT CITIZENS AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN**  
(SHEALY K)

- Current Status: 5/2/2023 - Ratified R 17

**HJR3312: CHILD FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES STUDY COMMITTEE**  
(HADDON P)

- Current Status: 4/25/2023 - SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

**SB126: CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT** (HEMBREE G)

- Current Status: 4/19/2023 - Committee report Senate Education: Favorable with amendment
- News Stories: 4/4/2023 - [SC senators advance “Charter School Accountability Act”](#)

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

- Current Status: 4/25/2023 - STATEWIDE SECOND READING BILLS
- News Stories: 4/13/2023 - [Work experience outside the classroom could help new teachers earn more in SC](#)

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

- Current Status: 5/4/2023 - House W&M Legislative: Revenue Policy Subcommittee, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- News Stories: 2/22/2023 - [Bill helping parents pay for private tuition through tax credits advances in SC Senate](#)

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## 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.

**[H. 4411: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Benefits](#)**  
*Trantham*

- Representative Ashley Trantham (R-Greenville), Representative Jerry



Carter (R-Pickens), Representative Terry Alexander (D-Florence) and others introduced a bill that would exclude any income earned by a child under 18 years who is attending high school or technical or vocational school from being counted toward household income for purposes of determining eligibility for and amount of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

- The bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

### **S. 764: Rock Hill School District 3 in York County**

*Climer*

- Senator Wes Climer (R-York), Senator Michael Johnson (R-York), Senator Harvey Peeler (R-Cherokee) introduced a bill that would reapportion the election districts for the members of the Board of Trustees of Rock Hill School District No. 3 of York County.
- The bill was adopted by the Senate and sent to the House.

### **H. 4440: Physical Education**

*Thayer*

- Representative Anne Thayer (R-Anderson), Representative Jay West (R-Anderson) and Representative Thomas Beach (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 to satisfy the physical education credit required for high school graduation.
- The bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

### **S. 782: Jasper County School District**

*Matthews*

- Senator Margie Bright Matthews (D-Colleton) and Senator Tom Davis (R-Beaufort) introduced a bill that would require the nine single-member districts from which each of the members of the Jasper County School District Board of Trustees must be elected beginning with the 2024 General Election.
- The bill was introduced and placed on the Senate calendar.

