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Legislative Update Week 16
April 29th, 2023



The SCEA President, Sherry East, with Representative Chandra Dillard (D-Greenville) at the SC State University Scholarship Gala

Things To Know

Educational Scholarship Trust Fund

After years of debate on private school vouchers, the House passed [S.39](#), Educational Scholarship Trust Funds, by a 79-35 vote.

Under the legislation, parents would 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 would 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.

[Representative Neal A. Collins](#) made a lengthy statement on Wednesday in opposition to this bill. He emphasized that this bill is a waste of time and money and highlighted how sending public funds to private schools diminishes the quality of public education.

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

The SCEA released a statement opposing the passage of S.39, which you can read [here](#).

SEE HOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVE VOTED ON VOUCHERS!

Read To Succeed

[The House Education and Public Works K-12 Committee](#) significantly altered [S.418](#) through use of what is called a “strike and insert” amendment.

This strike-and-insert amendment to the bill directs educators to use the “Science of Reading” approach. The amendment eliminates the “three-cueing” method of reading instruction (also called MSV), requires that third graders who cannot demonstrate reading proficiency be held back, extends Summer Reading Camps past third grade, and removes the PASS examination.

This bill was given a favorable report by the full [House Education and Public Works Committee](#) on Tuesday and will now head to the House floor.

Please send your feedback on this bill to seast@thescea.org.

Paid Family Leave for School District Employees

[H. 3908](#) 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. This bill 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).

The Full [Senate Finance Committee](#) favorably reported H.3908 on Wednesday. It will now move to the Senate floor for consideration.

[ASK YOUR SENATOR TO SUPPORT THIS BILL!](#)

Educator Assistance Act

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

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 to the state 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 ten days

following the posting of the district salary schedule. **Currently, teachers must sign contracts by May 10th**, which is before the salary schedule is posted. **If you have contract questions, please contact our member help desk by emailing help@thescea.org.**

The full [House Education and Public Works Committee](#) gave this bill a favorable report and it will now be put on the House Floor calendar.

Things to Watch for Next Week

There are only six days left in the legislative session, so most of the remaining bills will either be smaller, easier-to-pass measures or they will be postponed until next year.

Private School Children in Public School Sports

Most of the bills under consideration by the [House Education and Public Works Committee](#) involve letting private school children play public school sports. These bills include [H.4388](#), Interscholastic Athletics; [H.3305](#), Student Athletes; [H.3698](#), Home School Student Participation in Public School Interscholastic Activities; [H.3871](#), Student Athletes; [H.4121](#), Charter School Athletics; and [H.4125](#), Private School Sports Participation.

The Committee will meet on Tuesday, May 2, 1.5 hours upon House adjournment in Blatt 433.

[Visit The SCEA Action Center!](#)

Numbers to Know

7,277: Number of abortions in SC in 2022

40: Number of Anesthesiologists Assistants in South Carolina

147: Total number of miles of the South Carolina coastline

74: Number of public school districts in SC

\$30,000: 2023 Federal Poverty Level for a household of four

Education Bills That Moved This Week

[To Follow All Education Bill That Moved This Week Click Here.](#)

SB39: EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND (GROOMS L)

- Current Status: 4/27/2023 - Roll call [Yeas-74 Nays-36](#)
- 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](#)

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

- Current Status: 4/28/2023 - Read third time and enrolled

HB4300: FY2023-2024 APPROPRIATIONS (BANNISTER B)

- Current Status: 4/27/2023 - Debate adjourned
- 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](#)

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

- Current Status: 4/27/2023 - Scrivener's error corrected
- News Stories: 4/13/2023 - [SC bill requiring "fact-based" school lessons on race has bipartisan support after changes](#)
- 2/10/2023 - [SC "critical race theory" bill "undermined" by proposed changes, says GOP lead sponsor](#)
- 2/9/2023 - [SC House approves bill allowing parents to sue over suspicions of racist classroom lessons](#)

HB3908: PAID FAMILY LEAVE
(COLLINS N)

- Current Status: 4/26/2023 - Committee report Senate Finance: Favorable
- News Stories: 4/6/2023 - [SC House OKs up to 6 weeks paid leave for K-12 teachers after having or adopting a child](#)

SB256: SUNSCREEN AT SCHOOL
(JOHNSON M)

- Current Status: 4/26/2023 - Committee report House Education and Public Works: Favorable

SB418: READ TO SUCCEED ENDORSEMENTS (HEMBREE G)

- Current Status: 4/25/2023 - House Subcommittee recommends passage, as amended, EPW: K-12 Subcommittee

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

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

Bills That Saw No Movement, but We Continue to Monitor

Academic Choice in Education (ACE)

[S.285](#), would strengthen an existing program 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 South Carolina students, while our public schools lack the necessary resources.

The bill remained in committee this week.

Gender Identity

[S.627](#) mostly pertains to medical care, but it does include a section that prevents employees of public schools from “knowingly withholding from a minor’s parent or legal guardian information that [their] gender is inconsistent with [their] sex.”

It also requires educators to inform parents/legal guardians if they “know or suspect that a student suffers from gender dysphoria [or] gender identity disorder.”

This legislation could strip students of their privacy and prevent a safe environment for them to communicate with 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!](#)

Censorship

The [Senate Education Committee](#) passed [H.3728](#), (Transparency and Integrity in Education Act) favorably as amended on Wednesday.

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.

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, and we have seen how the real-world impacts of this kind of legislation have played out in other states.

The bill will now advance to the Senate floor for debate.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST CENSORSHIP!](#)

Budget

The budget is currently in conference committee, where the differences in the House version and the Senate version will be ironed out. Once they can agree on a budget, it will head to the Governor for signature. We will continue to monitor the budget and provide you with updates as it progresses.

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 5/2 in Blatt Room 433](#)

[H.3305](#), Student Athletes; [H.3698](#), Home School Student Participation in Public School Interscholastic Activities; [H.3871](#), Student Athletes; [H.4121](#), Charter School Athletics; and [H.4125](#), Private School Sports Participation; [H.4388](#), Interscholastic Athletics.

[Wed 5/3 9:00 AM in Gressette Room 207](#)

[H 3726](#) (Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act)

[Wed 5/3 9:00 AM in Blatt Room 503](#)

[S 714](#) (Fragile X Day)

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. 4363: School Crime Reports](#)

Tedder

- Representative Deon Tedder (D-Charleston) introduced a bill that would require public school administrators to report certain student criminal misconduct to law enforcement immediately.
- Administrators must refer minor incidents of student fighting to the district school board for a panel of board members to review and consider within 48 hours for referral to local law enforcement.
- The bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

H. 4374: Social Studies Curriculum Standards

Landing

- Representative Kathy Landing (R-Charleston), Representative Bill Hager (R-Hampton), Representative Alan Morgan (R-Greenville) and others introduced a bill that would require individuals assigned by the State Board of Education to write revisions to the state social studies standards of which integrates a traditional approach to history, which emphasizes the importance of leading individuals and key events in shaping the political, constitutional, intellectual, economic, diplomatic, and military history of the United States.
- The bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

H. 4388: Interscholastic Athletics

Erickson

- Representative Shannon Erickson (R-Beaufort), Representative Jason Elliot (R-Greenville), Representative Lucas Atkinson (D-Marion) and others introduced a bill that would establish the division of interscholastic athletics within the State Department of Education.
- The division would regulate the interscholastic athletics for South Carolina public schools and charter schools.
- The bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

