
To view this email as a web page, go [here](#).



Legislative Update Week 19
May 20th, 2023



The SCEA President, Sherry East, meets with [Representative Bill Hager](#).

Members Matter Special Session Edition

Although the first regular session of the 125th South Carolina General Assembly ended on May 11, the legislature reconvened this week at the request of the Governor. Since we are at the end of the first year of a two-year session, bills that do not pass this year will retain their same status next year.

As we outlined in [last week's update](#), the legislature typically approves what is called a Sine Die resolution upon adjournment. This resolution outlines when they can call a special session and which topics can be brought up during that session.

This year, the legislature adjourned regular session without a Sine Die resolution for the first time in over two decades, which means the Governor can call them back at any time to take up any issue.

We will continue to keep an eye on this special session and provide updates on education policy as it moves through the state house. In the meantime, we have provided a brief recap of this past legislative session.

The first year of the 125th General Assembly saw some positives for educators in South Carolina, most notably paid parental leave for teachers. South Carolina is the first state in the region to offer this benefit.

This is a big win for educators, and your collective action made it happen!

[Click here to view the bills we are tracking!](#)

Legislative Wins

Paid Family Leave

Last Friday, Governor McMaster signed [H.3908](#) into law. This same policy was passed in 2022 for state employees, but that measure included a carve-out for educators by classifying them as “district employees.” [H.3908](#) provides school employees with the same benefits as other state employees.

Specifically, the law provides:

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

The law takes effect on June 26, 2023.

There is no funding in the current state budget for this measure, so districts will need to fund this policy. The SCEA will continue to push the legislature to fully fund paid leave in the budget to ensure that every teacher in South Carolina receives this benefit.

Pending Legislation to Watch

NOTE: Any bills that do not make it through the legislature during the 2023 session and are not taken up in a special session will maintain their place in next year's legislative session.

2023-2024 Budget

The House and Senate have each passed their own version of a budget. Both versions include raises to the minimum educator salary schedule and increase funding for State Aid to Classrooms. However, there are concerns that the designated amount of state funding in either budget is not enough to cover paid parental leave, raises, and increases in the number of students in certain high-growth districts.

Since the House did not vote to concur with the Senate changes to their original budget, the budget is now in conference committee to work out the differences.

The six-member committee was originally scheduled to meet this past Tuesday, but that meeting was rescheduled, and a new time has not yet been determined. We will continue to monitor the conference committee and provide updates.

Members of the committee include [Representative Bannister](#), [Representative Herbkersman](#), [Representative Weeks](#), [Senator Peeler](#), [Senator Alexander](#), and [Senator Setzler](#).

Censorship

The Senate passed censorship bill [H.3728](#), the "[Transparency and Integrity in Education](#)" Act with amendments. The House non-concurred with the Senate's amendments by a vote of 111-3. The bill now heads to conference committee. We will provide updates once conference committee members are selected.

Supporters claim this bill's intention is to encourage transparent and fact-based school lessons on complex topics; however, this bill is part of a national agenda to inject political censorship into classrooms.

Other states with similar legislation have illustrated how the impact of this measure goes far beyond the stated intent and we anticipate that could happen in

South Carolina as well.

[Click here to take action!](#)

Read to Succeed

[S.418 \(Read to Succeed\)](#) passed the House with a 107-0 vote. 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 would direct educators to use the “Science of Reading” approach to teach literacy or reading.

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, and extends summer reading camps past third grade.

This bill is designed to eliminate the Read to Succeed professional development requirements for educators who are not directly involved in teaching early literacy. If passed, middle and high school administrators and teachers of content areas other than English/Language Arts will no longer be required to earn the literacy endorsement to maintain their certifications.

This bill is now in the Senate, which will need to approve the amended version.

Other Interests

- The General Assembly will hold an organizational meeting on May 24 to discuss issues surrounding the South Carolina High School League. This meeting is organizational only with no opportunity for public testimony and will be held in Blatt 110. Members of the committee include [Chair Shannon Erickson](#), [Representative Jeff Bradley](#), [Representative Terry Alexander](#), [Representative Kathy Landing](#), [Representative Deon Tedder](#), and [Representative Jay Kilmartin](#).
- [H.3360](#) was introduced to establish a Center for School Safety and Targeted Violence, which would provide extensive training, education, and expertise in the fields of school safety and targeted violence. This bill passed the house on March 9, received a second reading from the Senate on March 11 and remains on the Senate calendar for a third reading. There is a possibility that this bill could pass before the end of the special session.

- [H.4280](#), Educator Assistance Act, was introduced to provide professional certificates issued by the State Board of Education as permanent unless revoked or suspended and are not subject to renewal. The bill also provides that a teacher may not be required to renew a professional certificate issued by the Board. The bill passed the House on May 4 and was referred to the Senate Education Committee. It is unlikely that this bill will see further movement this year.
- A conference committee has been scheduled to review [H.4023, First Steps](#), on Wednesday at 10 a.m. in Blatt Room 516. The conferees appointed are [Representative Erickson](#), [Representative Jones](#), [Representative Tedder](#), [Senator Hembree](#), [Senator Turner](#), and [Senator Scott](#).

Visit The SCEA Action Center!

Numbers to Know

- 1,000:** Approximate number of abortions in SC from January to March
- 13:** Number of Covid-19 deaths in the last week in SC
- 14:** Number of SC counties that do not have an OB/GYN
- 17,454:** Number of public libraries in the U.S.
- 36:** Number of Democrats in the SC House of Representatives

Education Bills That Moved This Week

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

- Current Status: 5/17/2023 - Roll call Yeas-3 Nays-111
- State Bill Page: [HB3728](#)
- News Stories: 5/9/2023 - [This week in South Carolina politics: Here's what to know as legislative session nears end](#)
- 4/13/2023 - [SC bill requiring "fact-based" school lessons on race has](#)

[bipartisan support after changes](#)

SB256: SUNSCREEN AT SCHOOL (JOHNSON M)

- Current Status: 5/16/2023 - SIGNED BY GOVERNOR
- State Bill Page: [SB256](#)

HB3908: PAID FAMILY LEAVE (COLLINS N)

- Current Status: 5/12/2023 - SIGNED BY GOVERNOR
- State Bill Page: [H.3908](#)
- News Stories: 5/15/2023 - [Governor Henry McMaster signs parental leave bill into law](#)
- 5/11/2023 - [SC teachers, school employees paid parental leave bill passes](#)
- 5/9/2023 - [This week in South Carolina politics: Here's what to know as legislative session nears end](#)

HB4300: FY2023-2024 APPROPRIATIONS (BANNISTER B)

- Current Status: 5/18/2023 - Conference Committee on HB 4300 (Budget), (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- State Bill Page: [HB4300](#)
- News Stories: 5/17/2023 - [Editorial: SC legislators can claim overtime pay to finish their work; they shouldn't](#)
- 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](#)

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.

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.

H. 4485	Display of Ten Commandments in Public Schools	Beach
-------------------------	--	--------------

Representative Thomas Beach (R-Anderson), Representative Ryan McCabe (R-Lexington), Representative Joe White (R-Newberry) and others introduced a bill that would require a public elementary, middle school, or secondary school the the state to display in each classroom a poster or framed copy of the Ten Commandments. The bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

