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***Week 4: February 6 - February 8, 2024***

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*Robin Anderson, Dawn Duke, Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter, Mary Wood, The SCEA President Sherry East, and Hope Lights at the Riley-Wilkins OneSouthCarolina Awards*

## **2024 Riley-Wilkins OneSouthCarolina Legislative and Civic Leadership Awards Dinner**

Earlier last month, The SCEA joined elected officials and other organizations at the Riley-Wilkins OneSouthCarolina Awards Dinner.

This dinner, hosted by the Furman University Riley Institute, honors individuals who exemplify what can be achieved through empathy, collaboration, perseverance, and an unwavering commitment to the wellbeing of South Carolinians.

This year's awardees were Senator Nikki Setzler (D-Lexington) and Retired CEO of Sonoco Products Company Harris DeLoach.



*Mary Wood, State Senator Nikki Setzler (D-Lexington), and Dawn Duke*

More information and video of the event is available [here](#).

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## **The SCEA Lobby Day 2024**

The SCEA's annual Lobby Day will be held on Wednesday, February 28. Join fellow active, aspiring, and retired members to advocate for our students, our schools, and our profession at the South Carolina Statehouse!

Lobby Day brings members from across the state together at the state capitol to discuss legislative priorities with elected officials. You won't want to miss this opportunity to make your voice heard.

Plus, our student chapter is launching a campaign to push for paid student teaching in South Carolina. To kick off this campaign, they have a fun and unique activity planned for Lobby Day – we will be sharing more details soon!

Click the link below for additional information and registration.

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## S.305: Work Experience for New Teachers

[S. 305](#) would count prior relevant work experience towards an initial educator certification to allow educators to start on a higher salary step.

If passed, S.305 would allow individuals with at least five years of relevant experience to count those years towards a higher salary step. Relevant work experience must have been within the ten years prior to seeking certification.

The Senate version includes several clarifying amendments. One of these amendments specifies that the bill considers years of relevant work experience only for salary schedule advancement.

Another amendment clarifies that educators who entered the profession prior to July 1, 2023, may request to have relevant work experience considered for purposes of advancing on the salary schedule during the current year only. This means that current educators would not receive retroactive pay for increased years of experience.

Earlier this week, the Senate added another amendment to this bill—this amendment deletes section 59-25-60 (E), which includes experience as a paraprofessional in the definition of “relevant work experience.”

The bill is currently in the House Education & Public Works Committee.

The SCEA feels that this could help recruit and retain educators. Please send feedback on this bill to President Sherry East, [seast@thescea.org](mailto:seast@thescea.org).

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## State Board of Education Regulation 43-170

Last fall, the State Board of Education (SBE) released a proposed change to the regulations regarding selection of instructional materials.

As a reminder, this proposed regulation establishes two main guidelines for instructional materials that use narrow definitions of “age appropriate” and “educationally suitable,” which would ban several classic works of literature, such as *The Odyssey*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and others.

To make this regulation less damaging, members of the Freedom to Read Coalition worked with librarians to develop a list of amendments to Regulation 43-170.

Those amendments include:

- A centralized opt-out process that allows parents to opt their children out of any titles they deem unsuitable for the individual student.
- A reasonable definition of “obscene materials” that is consistent with existing state law, and which takes into account the artistic and literary merit of instructional materials.
- A limit on the number of formal challenges a complainant can file at one time.
- A requirement that challenged books remain on shelves while under review.
- The inclusion of at least one certified school librarian and a team of at least five classroom teachers on instructional material review committees at the school, district, and state levels.
- A mandate that complainants have a documented conversation about the merits of the work with school administrators before filing a formal challenge.
- The inclusion of high school students on high school level instructional material review committees.

**A public hearing will be held on this regulation at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 13 at the Rutledge Conference Center in Columbia.** We are asking members to send an email to the State Board of Education asking them to support these amendments to Regulation 43-170.

[Click Here to Send Your Email](#)

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## H.3309: Safe Seizure Schools Act

The House began debate on [H.3309](#), the “Seizure Safe Schools Act” last week but did not take a vote until this week. This bill would require public schools to create seizure response plans that include training for educators so that they know how to recognize signs and symptoms of seizures, an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for situations when a student has a seizure, and allow parents to give permission for students with epilepsy to self-administer medication as necessary.

H.3309 was passed on Wednesday in a 114-0 vote. It will now go to the Senate.

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## H.5022: Universal Free Meals at Public Schools

[H.5022](#) would allow schools that participate in the school breakfast program to provide breakfast and lunch to all students without charge.

[Research has shown](#) that providing universal school meals improves academic performance, in addition to significantly curbing child hunger. NEA has [long](#)

[advocated](#) for universal school meal programs.

H.5022 is currently in the House Ways and Means Committee. They have not scheduled a hearing on the bill, so we are asking members to contact the Committee and ask them to support this bill. You can send your email at the link below.

[Click Here to Email the Committee](#)

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## **H.4655: Physical Education and Activity**

[H.4655](#) would change the existing requirements for PE and physical activity for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

This bill would increase the minimum required time for physical education (PE) to ninety minutes per week for elementary school students and sixty hours per year for middle school students.

Additionally, this bill would require schools to provide a minimum of 20 minutes of daily unstructured recess to students in kindergarten through eighth grade and provide a plan for indoor recess periods during inclement weather.

This bill is currently in the House Education & Public Works Committee. Please send feedback on this bill to President Sherry East, [seast@thescea.org](mailto:seast@thescea.org).

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## **H.3295: Competency-Based Education**

[H.3295](#) was introduced last year. It passed the House but has remained in the Senate Education Committee since March.

This bill creates an exemption process for schools that implement competency-based education practices and provides guidelines for competency-based education strategies. It also clarifies the code around school year start dates to make it easier for districts that have moved to year-round school calendar.

The Senate Education Subcommittee reported favorably on H.3295. It now heads to the full Senate Education Committee.

Please send feedback on this bill to President Sherry East, [seast@thescea.org](mailto:seast@thescea.org).

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## **H.3728: Transparency and Integrity in Education Act**

[H.3728](#) is a censorship bill that was passed at the end of last year. 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.

This bill was passed by both the South Carolina House and the Senate; but each chamber passed a slightly different version of the bill. It is currently awaiting a hearing in a conference committee. The House version of this bill would allow any parent or guardian, from anywhere in the country, to file a lawsuit against a district or educator without ever having a conversation with the accused educator or their administration.

The SCEA is concerned that this bill—especially if the provision described above is included—will further drive educators out of the classroom and chill important discussions of race, gender, and other important issues.

The conference committee has not yet taken action on 3728, so we are asking members to share stories of how they have been impacted by censorship policies. If you have not been impacted yet but fear that you will be, please share those concerns as well. We plan to share these stories with elected officials to try and stop this harmful legislation.

[Click Here to Share Your Story](#)

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## Education Bills That Moved This Week

### **HB3617: PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

(Bernstein, B)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTIONS 8-11-150 AND 8-11-155, BOTH RELATING TO PAID PARENTAL LEAVE, SO AS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WEEKS OF PAID PARENTAL LEAVE IN THE EVENT OF THE BIRTH OR ADOPTION OF A CHILD FOR ELIGIBLE STATE EMPLOYEES.

- 2/8/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Ott

### **SB245: BOOSTER CLUBS**

(Kimbrell, J)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 59-17-170 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON WITH CERTAIN CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS IS PROHIBITED FROM SERVING AS THE TREASURER OF A BOOSTER CLUB, TO PROVIDE THAT EACH BOOSTER CLUB WITHIN A SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL ANNUALLY REGISTER WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD, TO PROVIDE THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD MUST RUN A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK TO DETERMINE IF THE TREASURER OF A BOOSTER CLUB IS PROHIBITED FROM SERVING IN THAT ROLE DUE TO A CRIMINAL CONVICTION, AND TO DEFINE NECESSARY TERMS.

- 2/8/2024 - Read third time and returned to Senate with amendments

### **SB839: HOMICIDE BY CHILD ABUSE**

(Alexander, T)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 16-3-85, RELATING TO HOMICIDE BY CHILD ABUSE, SO AS TO INCREASE THE AGE OF A CHILD UNDER THIS SECTION FROM UNDER THE AGE OF ELEVEN TO UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN.

- 2/8/2024 - Senate Subcommittee on S.235, S.839, S.877, S.947, S.954, S.995 and S.996, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- 2/8/2024 - Senate Subcommittee recommends passage Senate Subcommittee on S.235, S.839, S.877, S.947, S.954, S.995 and S.996

#### **HB3309: SEIZURE SAFE SCHOOLS ACT**

(Gilliam, L)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "SEIZURE SAFE SCHOOLS ACT" BY ADDING SECTION 59-63-97 SO AS TO REQUIRE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SEIZURE ACTION PLANS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND TO PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCH PLANS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

- 2/7/2024 - Senate Education Subcommittee on SB584, SB729, HB3295 and HB3309, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- 2/7/2024 - Senate Subcommittee recommends passage Senate Education Subcommittee

#### **SB245: BOOSTER CLUBS**

(Kimbrell, J)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 59-17-170 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON WITH CERTAIN CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS IS PROHIBITED FROM SERVING AS THE TREASURER OF A BOOSTER CLUB, TO PROVIDE THAT EACH BOOSTER CLUB WITHIN A SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL ANNUALLY REGISTER WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD, TO PROVIDE THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD MUST RUN A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK TO DETERMINE IF THE TREASURER OF A BOOSTER CLUB IS PROHIBITED FROM SERVING IN THAT ROLE DUE TO A CRIMINAL CONVICTION, AND TO DEFINE NECESSARY TERMS.

- 2/7/2024 - Amended
- 2/7/2024 - Read second time
- 2/7/2024 - Roll call Yeas-111 Nays-0

#### **SB305: WORK EXPERIENCE CREDIT FOR NEW TEACHERS**

(Young, Jr., T)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 59-25-60 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT AN INDIVIDUAL'S PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE MAY BE AWARDED ON AN INITIAL TEACHING CERTIFICATE IF THE PRIOR EXPERIENCE IS IN OR RELATED TO THE CONTENT FIELD OF THE CERTIFICATE, AND TO PROVIDE THAT EXISTING CERTIFICATE HOLDERS MAY ALSO RECEIVE THE SAME CREDIT FOR PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE.

- 2/7/2024 - Introduced and read first time (House Journal-page 5)
- 2/7/2024 - Referred to Committee House Education and Public Works
- 2/7/2024 - Scrivener's error corrected

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## Upcoming Meetings of Interest

### [Tue 2/13 in Blatt Room 433](#)

[H 4374](#) (Social Studies Curriculum Standards); [H 4655](#) (Unstructured and Self-directed Recess in Public Schools); [H 4709](#) (Cursive Writing Coursework)

### [Wed 2/14 10:00 AM in Gressette Room 105](#)

[S 418](#) (Read to Succeed Endorsements); [S 905](#) (Read to Succeed)

### [Wed 2/14 10:00 AM in Gressette Room 308](#)

[H 4624](#) (Gender Reassignment Procedures)

### [Thu 2/15 10:00 AM in Gressette Room 308](#)

[H 4624](#) (Gender Reassignment Procedures)

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## Introductions of Interest

### [S. 1025: Aiken County School Board, Reapportioned](#)

Young

Senators Tom Young (R-Aiken), Shane Massey (R-Edgefield), Nikki Setzler (D-Lexington), and Brad Hutto (D-Orangeburg) introduced legislation to update demographic information regarding election districts for the school board of Aiken County and reapportion districts beginning with the school board elections in 2024.

This bill currently resides in the Senate.

### [H. 5052: School Board Elections, Partisan](#)

Morgan

Representative Adam Morgan (R-Greenville) and others introduced legislation to require all elected members of the boards of trustees for school districts to be elected in partisan elections and provide other filing methods and deadlines for candidates seeking election. This bill states that these provisions supersede any inconsistent provisions of a special act or local law.

This bill was referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

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