



Week 6: February 13 - February 15



The SCEA President Sherry East with Representative Shannon Erickson at the Women's Caucus Luncheon



The SCEA Lobby Day 2024

There's still time to register for The SCEA's annual Lobby Day 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.

Click the link below for additional information and registration.

[Click Here to Join Us for Lobby Day](#)

State Board of Education Regulation 43-170

The State Board of Education (SBE) held a hearing on Tuesday to discuss a proposed regulation that would change the existing process for selecting 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 (listed in full in [last week's Members Matter](#)) were presented to the SBE ahead of Tuesday's meeting.

The SBE decided to adopt the following amendments:

- Removed the requirement that materials meet FCC guidelines;
- Added a requirement that challenges must be from parents or legal guardians – this changes prior language that allowed any taxpayer to file a complaint against a book;
- Placed limits on the number of challenges to five per person each calendar month;
- Allows districts can choose to refer challenges to the State Board;
- Removes the requirement that districts review all existing materials.

The regulation will now go to the legislature, which has the option to either approve the regulation, not approve the legislation, or send it back to the SBE with requested changes. If the legislature takes no action within 120 days, the regulation is automatically approved as-is.

The SCEA had planned to testify in opposition, but the SBE limited public comment so we were not able to. You can read our planned testimony at the link below.

Thank you to everyone who wrote a letter, contacted their State Board member, and came out to speak at the meeting on Tuesday. Because of your advocacy efforts, this regulation is now much less damaging than the original proposal.

S.905 and S.418: Read to Succeed

The Senate Education Committee held another hearing on [S.905](#), which would eliminate Read to Succeed requirements for educators who are not directly involved in teaching early literacy. It also directs educators to use the “Science of Reading” approach to teach literacy and reading, requires that third graders who cannot demonstrate reading proficiency be held back, and extends summer reading camps so they start earlier than third grade.

The committee approved the bill, which now goes to the Senate floor.

This bill is very similar in language to [S.418](#), which was introduced last year but stalled in the Senate after the House made drastic changes. The Senate Education Committee took the language from S.905 and placed it back into S.418 using what’s called a “strike-and-insert” amendment, which are frequently used to change large portions of a bill.

Putting that language into both bills allows them to have options for passing this legislation. We will continue to monitor both bills as they move through the legislature.

H.4374: Social Studies Curriculum

[H.4374](#) is a bill that would change the way that social studies curriculum is evaluated. This bill was originally introduced in April of last year and directed social studies curricula to take 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 now includes a provision that requires that anyone responsible for reviewing or revising state standards “may not have a record of promoting political or social issues in classroom instruction, including the presentation of theoretical perspectives that are critical of society and culture as being factual” and “may not have a record of supporting narratives which characterize the founding of the United States, its evolution to a constitutional republic, or the history of the United States in general, as a story of oppression.” This bill also gives State Superintendent Ellen Weaver the authority (“at her discretion”) to remove someone if she feels they have violated these provisions.

The House Education & Public Works Committee held a hearing on this bill on Tuesday, but no action was taken.

[You can read the bill in its entirety here.](#) **Please read this bill carefully and send all feedback to President East, seast@thescea.org.**

H.4624: Gender-Affirming Care

On Wednesday and Thursday, the Senate Medical Affairs Subcommittee held hearings on [H.4624](#).

Most of this bill pertains to medical care and seeks to ban minors from receiving “gender-affirming care.” It also bans Medicaid from reimbursing for gender-affirming care provided to individuals under the age of 26.

There is one section that prevents public school employees from “withholding from a minor’s parent or legal guardian information related to the minor’s perception that [their] gender is inconsistent with [their] sex.” While the most problematic language regarding educators has been removed, this bill still puts LGBTQ students at risk and prevents them from accessing necessary gender-affirming care.

The SCEA is concerned that H. 4624 would prevent a safe environment for educators to effectively communicate with students. As they did during the House hearings, several doctors, transgender individuals, educators, and parents of transgender children spoke to the Senate Subcommittee about the harm this bill would cause.

Our Center for Educator Wellness and Learning (CEWL) hosted a [livestream discussion](#) about this bill, gender affirming care, and the negative impacts this will have on LGBTQ+ people in South Carolina.

You can also check out resources from [PFLAG](#), [Harriett Hancock Center](#), and the [Alliance for Full Acceptance \(AFFA-SC\)](#).

The committee did not take any action on the bill and will continue discussion on it at future committee meetings.

H.4866: Smart Heart

[H.4866](#) would require public schools to develop and implement a cardiac emergency response plan, an athletic emergency action plan, and to ensure that every school has at least one Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) and that the AED is easily accessible during athletic events.

The bill was introduced last month and is currently in the House Education and Public Works Committee.

H.4709: Cursive Writing Coursework

[H.4709](#) would require cursive writing to be taught in public schools starting in second grade and continuing through fifth grade. Cursive handwriting has not been a curriculum requirement in South Carolina since 2008.

The House Education and Public Works K-12 Subcommittee held a hearing on the bill on Tuesday and gave it a favorable report. It now heads to the full House EPW committee.

State-level Candidate Filing Deadline

Filing for state-level candidates begins on March 1 and closes on March 30, 2024. As a reminder, the full House and the Senate are up for reelection this year.

The SCEA will monitor candidate filing and provide more information about candidates and upcoming elections as they get closer.

In the meantime, you can learn more about upcoming elections at www.scvotes.gov

Unsure of who your legislators are? Use our handy [legislator lookup tool](#) to find your elected officials!

Paid Student Practicums

The Student SCEA has launched a campaign to push for paid student practicums in South Carolina. Currently, student teaching is unpaid, creating a barrier to entry for aspiring educators who cannot afford to work without pay.

The Student SCEA is advocating for paid student teaching because work should be compensated, and because our teacher shortage crisis is too dire to continue excluding would-be educators who cannot afford to work for a semester without pay.

Visit our Action Center and let us know how you're willing to advocate for paid student teaching!

[Tell us How You'd Like to Advocate for Paid Practicums!](#)

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.

The House Education & Public Works Committee held a hearing on this bill on Tuesday. They reviewed a few proposed amendments that seek to ensure unstructured PE does not negatively impact classroom time and agreed to hold another hearing to discuss those and report on the bill.

Please send feedback on this bill to President Sherry East, seast@thescea.org.

SC TEACHER Retention Report

SC TEACHER is an organization that gathers data on education in South Carolina, including an annual working conditions report. They recently released a report on South Carolina teacher retention. The report analyzes data from eighty school districts over the past six years to address how retention rates differ from district to district and how those rates are impacted by school factors.

You can read the full report [here](#).

House Recess and Budget Updates

To give the Ways and Means Committee time to catch up on the budget, the House will be furloughed next week. They will resume normal session on Tuesday, February 27th.

The Ways & Means Committee has not yet created a formal state budget. The Governor and the Department of Education released their budgets at the beginning of the year; however, these are not binding. In effect, the Governor's budget is a "wish list" that signifies his legislative priorities.

If you would like to contact the House Ways and Means Committee to give feedback on proposed budget items (such as the Governor's suggestion to simplify the pay schedule), you can send an email to the Committee at the link below.

[Click Here to Email the Committee With Budget Concerns](#)

Education Bills That Moved This Week

[HB4538: SOUTH CAROLINA STUDENT PHYSICAL PRIVACY ACT](#)

(Cromer, A)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "SOUTH CAROLINA STUDENT PHYSICAL PRIVACY ACT" BY ADDING ARTICLE 4 TO CHAPTER 23, TITLE 59 SO AS TO STATE PURPOSES, PROVIDE DEFINITIONS, PROVIDE THAT EVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL RESTROOM AND CHANGING FACILITY THAT IS ACCESSIBLE BY MULTIPLE

PERSONS MUST BE DESIGNATED FOR USE ONLY BY MEMBERS OF ONE SEX, AND TO PROVIDE CIVIL PENALTIES.

- 2/13/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor : Mitchell, Yow, McCabe, Herbkersman

HB4655: UNSTRUCTURED AND SELF-DIRECTED RECESS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Haddon, P)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 59-10-10, RELATING TO STANDARDS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE, SO AS TO REQUIRE CERTAIN MANDATORY MINIMUM PERIODS FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECESS IN FOUR-YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE EACH YEAR IN ADDITION TO OTHER CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS, AND TO PROVIDE RECESS PERIODS MUST BE HELD INDOORS DURING TIMES OF INCLEMENT WEATHER; TO REDESIGNATE ARTICLE 1 OF CHAPTER 10, TITLE 59 AS "PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ACTIVITY"; TO PROVIDE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL TAKE CERTAIN MEASURES TO CONFORM THEIR RESPECTIVE REGULATIONS AND RULES TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT; AND TO CLARIFY THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT PREVAIL TO THE EXTENT THEY CONFLICT WITH ANY SUCH REGULATIONS AND RULES.

- 2/13/2024 - House EPW: K-12 Subcommittee, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)

HB4709: CURSIVE WRITING COURSEWORK

(Rivers, Sr., M)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 59-29-15, RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENT THAT CURSIVE WRITING BE TAUGHT IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SO AS TO SPECIFY THAT THE CURSIVE WRITING INSTRUCTION MUST BEGIN IN SECOND GRADE AND CONTINUE IN EACH GRADE THROUGH FIFTH GRADE.

- 2/13/2024 - House EPW: K-12 Subcommittee, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- 2/13/2024 - House Subcommittee recommends passage House EPW: K-12 Subcommittee

HB4624: GENDER REASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES

(Hiott, D)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING CHAPTER 42 TO TITLE 44 SO AS TO DEFINE GENDER, SEX, AND OTHER TERMS, TO PROHIBIT THE PROVISION OF GENDER TRANSITION PROCEDURES TO A PERSON UNDER EIGHTEEN YEARS OF AGE, TO PROVIDE EXCEPTIONS, TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS FOR GENDER TRANSITION PROCEDURES, AND TO PROVIDE PENALTIES; AND BY ADDING SECTION 59-32-36 SO AS TO PROHIBIT PUBLIC SCHOOL STAFF AND OFFICIALS FROM WITHHOLDING KNOWLEDGE OF A MINOR'S PERCEPTION OF THEIR GENDER FROM THE MINOR'S PARENTS, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

- 2/14/2024 - Senate Medical Affairs Subcommittee on HB4624, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)

HB4697: INCOME TAX DEDUCTION

(Kilmartin, J)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 12-6-1172 SO AS TO EXEMPT THE RETIREMENT INCOME OF FIRST RESPONDERS, LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, AND TEACHERS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 12-6-1170, RELATING TO RETIREMENT INCOME DEDUCTION, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES.

- 2/14/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Schuessler

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.

- 2/14/2024 - Concurred in House amendment and enrolled
- 2/14/2024 - Roll call Ayes-45 Nays-0

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 2/20 3:00 PM in Gressette Room 105](#)

[S 839](#) (Homicide by Child Abuse)

[Wed 2/21 11:00 AM in Gressette Room 105](#)

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

Elections and Voter Registration Information

The Republican Presidential Primary will be held on Saturday, February 24, 2024.

While it is too late to register to vote in the upcoming Republican Presidential Primary, 17-year-olds who will be 18 by the time of the election are allowed to pre-register to vote. In order to vote in an election, you must be registered to vote

at least 30 days prior to the election.

You can check your voter registration and find more election information, including your polling precinct, at www.scvotes.gov.

