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Week 8: February 27 - February 29



Members of The SCEA and The SCEA-Retired at Lobby Day

Lobby Day

Thank you to everyone who joined us on Wednesday for our annual Lobby Day! It was a great day for advocacy where members had the opportunity to speak to their elected officials about ways to strengthen public education.

If you weren't able to make it, check out our Action Center for ways to advocate for our public schools!

[Visit our Action Center!](#)



H.5164: Universal Voucher Expansion

On Wednesday, House leadership introduced a bill to expand the Education Scholarship Trust Fund. [H.5164](#) would eliminate the existing income-based

eligibility requirements, making vouchers available to every South Carolina family by the 2026-2027 school year.

During a [press conference](#) to announce the bill's filing, State Superintendent Ellen Weaver cited states like Arizona and Florida as examples of how ESAs were "tried and tested successfully" and "allow vital flexibility for families to customize their child's education." [However, the reality in those states](#) is that these policies overwhelmingly benefit wealthy families that were already sending their children to private school while draining state budgets and increasing costs for taxpayers.

The SCEA strongly opposes this bill because we believe that any voucher program violates our state constitution, and we believe that public money belongs in public institutions, including our education system.

The House Education and Public Works K-12 Subcommittee has scheduled a [hearing](#) on Tuesday afternoon.

Contact the House Education and Public Works Subcommittee and tell them to oppose this bill:

[Click Here to Send Your Email](#)

Voucher Lawsuit

In October, The SCEA, along with public school parents and other partner organizations, filed a lawsuit against the newly-instituted voucher program that establishes the Education Scholarship Trust, which will provide eligible families up to \$6,000 to send their child to a private school.

In December, the South Carolina Supreme Court announced that they had granted our request for a hearing to seek declaratory and injunctive relief on a recently enacted voucher scheme.

Oral arguments for the lawsuit will take place this Wednesday, March 6th. [You can watch the livestream of those proceedings here.](#)

H.4624: Gender-Affirming Care

On Thursday, the full Senate Medical Affairs Committee held a hearing on [H.4624](#).

Most of this bill pertains to medical care and seeks to ban minors from receiving "gender-affirming care." However, it also bans Medicaid from reimbursing for gender-affirming care. The Senate Medical Affairs Committee changed this provision—which originally only banned Medicaid reimbursements for people aged 26 and under—into a blanket ban on Medicaid reimbursing for gender-affirming care.

The first version of this bill required educators to out transgender and nonbinary

students, even if doing so puts the student at risk of abuse or homelessness. That provision was taken out in the House, but last week, the subcommittee approved an amendment to put that language back into the bill. You can view that amendment in full [here](#).

The SCEA is deeply concerned that H. 4624 would prevent a safe environment for educators to effectively communicate with students. During public comment in both chambers, doctors, transgender individuals, educators, and parents of transgender children spoke about the extreme 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.

The Senate Medical Affairs Committee gave a favorable report to the bill in a 10-6 vote. It now goes to the full Senate. Click the link below to email your senator and tell them to oppose this bill.

[Click Here to Email Your Senator](#)

S.418/S.905: Read to Succeed

On Thursday, the House concurred with Senate changes to [S.418](#). This bill eliminates 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 bill now goes to the Governor for signature. If the Governor signs it, it will become law.

H.3295: Competency-Based Education

[H.3295](#) creates an exemption process for schools that implement competency-based education practices and provides guidelines for competency-based education strategies. This provides public schools with more flexibility to adapt less traditional curriculum strategies.

[This article](#) on our website provides more information about competency-based education and how it compares to traditional methods.

H.3295 also clarifies the code around school year start dates to make it easier for districts that have moved to a year-round school calendar.

This bill passed the House last year but was not taken up by the Senate Education Committee until this week. The Committee gave the bill a favorable report, so it now goes to the full Senate.

H.4655: Physical Education and Unstructured Recess

[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.

On Tuesday, the House Education & Public Works (EPW) Committee adopted an amendment that would change the student-teacher ratio for these unstructured PE time from 28:1 to be based on state regulation. The amendment also specifies that recess would be held indoors during inclement weather and that this should not reduce the amount of art instruction students receive. Finally, the amendment changes the date this would take effect: instead of upon signature by the Governor, it would not be implemented until June 1, 2025.

With this amendment, the bill was given a favorable report by the full House EPW Committee. It now heads to the House floor.

H.4709: Cursive Writing Coursework

[H.4709](#) requires that elementary school curriculum include cursive writing beginning in second grade and continuing until fifth grade. The bill was heard by the House Education and Public Works Committee on Tuesday and given a favorable report. On Wednesday, the full House voted on the bill, which passed 107-1.

H.3309: Seizure Safe Schools

[H.3309](#) will 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.

The full Senate Education Committee discussed this bill on Wednesday and gave it a favorable report. It now goes to the full Senate.

Budget and Education Provisos

There was no further movement on the budget this week. The current list of provisos regarding education funding is available [here](#). The Committee has also put together a spreadsheet outlining education funding in the proposed budget so far, which you can view [here](#).

Last week, the Ways & Means Committee released a proposed update to the minimum statewide salary schedule, which would raise the starting salary to \$47,000. Unlike the Governor’s proposal, this salary schedule starts with bachelor’s degree and includes pay increases for bachelor’s +18, master’s, master’s +30, and doctorate degrees. You can view the full salary proposal below:

Figure 1

FY 2024-25 W&M DRAFT MINIMUM TEACHER SALARY SCHEDULE (as of 2/1/24)

YEARS EXP	BACHELORS		MASTERS DEGREE	MASTERS DEGREE +30 HOURS	DR DEGREE
	DEGREE	DEGREE + 18 HOURS			
0	\$47,000	\$47,500	\$51,000	\$52,500	\$55,000
1	\$47,250	\$47,750	\$51,250	\$52,750	\$55,500
2	\$47,500	\$48,000	\$51,500	\$53,000	\$56,000
3	\$47,750	\$48,250	\$51,750	\$53,250	\$56,500
4	\$48,000	\$48,500	\$52,000	\$53,500	\$57,000
5	\$48,000	\$48,500	\$52,000	\$53,500	\$57,500
6	\$49,000	\$49,500	\$53,000	\$54,000	\$58,000
7	\$49,500	\$50,000	\$53,500	\$54,500	\$59,000
8	\$50,000	\$50,500	\$54,000	\$55,000	\$60,500
9	\$50,500	\$51,000	\$54,500	\$55,500	\$62,000
10	\$51,000	\$51,500	\$55,000	\$56,000	\$63,250
11	\$52,000	\$52,500	\$56,000	\$57,000	\$64,500
12	\$52,500	\$53,000	\$56,500	\$58,000	\$65,750
13	\$53,000	\$53,500	\$57,250	\$59,000	\$67,000
14	\$53,500	\$54,000	\$58,000	\$60,000	\$68,250
15	\$54,000	\$54,500	\$58,750	\$61,000	\$69,500
16	\$54,500	\$55,000	\$59,500	\$62,000	\$70,750
17	\$55,000	\$55,500	\$60,250	\$63,000	\$72,000
18	\$55,500	\$56,000	\$61,000	\$64,000	\$72,500
19	\$56,000	\$56,500	\$61,750	\$64,500	\$73,000
20	\$57,000	\$57,500	\$62,750	\$65,000	\$73,750
21	\$57,500	\$58,000	\$63,250	\$65,500	\$74,500
22	\$58,000	\$58,500	\$63,750	\$66,000	\$75,250
23	\$58,500	\$59,000	\$64,250	\$66,500	\$75,750
24	\$59,000	\$59,500	\$64,750	\$67,000	\$76,000
25	\$59,500	\$60,000	\$65,250	\$67,500	\$76,250
26	\$60,000	\$60,500	\$65,750	\$68,000	\$76,500
27	\$60,500	\$61,000	\$66,250	\$68,500	\$76,750
28+	\$60,750	\$61,250	\$66,500	\$68,750	\$77,000
28+	\$61,000	\$61,500	\$66,750	\$69,000	\$77,000

Each of the budget provisos, including this working salary schedule, still must go through the full House, then the Senate Finance Committee—which means they are still a long way from being finalized.

You can send an email to the Ways and Means Committee using the link below. If you would like to give feedback to your Representative on the budget, you can use our handy [legislator lookup tool](#) to find their contact information.

[Click Here to Thank the Ways and Means Committee](#)

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.4866: Smart Heart Act

[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. Funding for this would be provided through a budget proviso.

The SCEA submitted a letter in favor of this bill, which you can view [here](#).

The House EPW K-12 Subcommittee adjourned debate on the bill this week, so it remains in the subcommittee.

School District Reapportionments

There are multiple bills in the legislature currently that would change the structure of certain school districts.

[H.5153](#) would restructure Anderson District 2 by replacing the existing two multi-member districts with four single-member districts. School Board members must reside in the district they wish to represent and will serve four-year terms. This bill passed the House with a 99-0 vote and now heads to the Senate.

[H.5168](#) changes the Kershaw County School Board district lines and numbers to reflect population growth and changing demographics. It passed the House with a 103-0 vote and now heads to the Senate.

[S.1025](#) reapportions Aiken County School Board districts and redesignates the

map numbers for these districts. It passed the Senate in an uncontested vote and now heads to the House.

Education Bills That Moved This Week

HB4649: PRIVATE SECURITY SERVICES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Bannister, B)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 59-19-275 SO AS TO PROVIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH MORE THAN FIFTEEN THOUSAND STUDENTS MAY USE CERTAIN SECURITY PERSONNEL TO PROMOTE SAFETY AND SECURITY ON SCHOOL PREMISES IF LICENSED AS A PROPRIETARY SECURITY BUSINESS, AND TO PROVIDE DISTRICTS REMAIN OBLIGATED TO USE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED BY LAW; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-18-60, RELATING TO PROPRIETARY SECURITY BUSINESS LICENSURE, SO AS TO ADD PROVISIONS CONCERNING PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS APPLYING FOR LICENSURE; BY AMENDING SECTION 40-18-80, RELATING TO SECURITY OFFICER REGISTRATION CERTIFICATION, SO AS TO PROVIDE THE SOUTH CAROLINA LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION SHALL IMPLEMENT CERTAIN RELATED TRAINING REQUIREMENTS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 40-18-140, RELATING TO EXCEPTIONS FROM PRIVATE SECURITY AND INVESTIGATION AGENCY LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS, SO AS TO CLARIFY THAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE EXCLUDED FROM THESE REQUIREMENTS.

- 2/27/2024 - House EPW: K-12 Subcommittee, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- 2/27/2024 - House Education and Public Works , (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- 2/27/2024 - House Subcommittee recommends passage, as amended, House Education and Public Works K12 Subcommittee
- 2/27/2024 - House Committee recommends passage, as amended, House Full Education and Public Works Committee

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.

- 2/27/2024 - House EPW: K-12 Subcommittee, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- 2/27/2024 - House Education and Public Works, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- 2/27/2024 - House Subcommittee recommends passage, as amended, House Education and Public Works K12 Subcommittee
- 2/27/2024 - House Committee recommends passage, as amended, House Full Education and Public Works Committee

HB4703: SOUTH CAROLINA STEM OPPORTUNITY ACT

(Davis, S)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE "SOUTH CAROLINA STEM OPPORTUNITY ACT" BY ADDING ARTICLE 17 TO CHAPTER 1, TITLE 13 SO AS TO ESTABLISH THE SOUTH CAROLINA SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) COALITION, THE SOUTH CAROLINA SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) EDUCATION FUND WITHIN THE STATE TREASURY, AND THE SC STEM COALITION ADVISORY COUNCIL, AND TO PROVIDE THEIR RESPECTIVE PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS.

- 2/27/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Schuessler

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.

- 2/27/2024 - House Education and Public Works, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)
- 2/27/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: McGinnis, Schuessler
- 2/27/2024 - House Committee recommends passage House Full Education and Public Works Committee
- 2/28/2024 - Committee report House Education and Public Works: Favorable

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.

- 2/28/2024 - Senate Education, (Bill Scheduled for Hearing)

- 2/28/2024 - Senate Committee recommends passage Senate Education Committee
- 2/28/2024 - Committee report Senate Education: Favorable

HB4665: MEMBER REQUIREMENTS

(Johnson, J)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING SECTION 2-1-260 SO AS TO REQUIRE EVERY MEMBER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO SERVE AS A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER, OR OTHERWISE VOLUNTEER, AT A SOUTH CAROLINA K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL.

- 2/28/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Henegan, Williams, Gilliard, Rivers, Clyburn, Hosey, Anderson, Hart, Bamberg, Hayes, Alexander, Kirby, Jefferson, W.Jones

HB4691: PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Smith, M)

A BILL TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING CHAPTER 23 TO TITLE 63 SO AS TO RECOGNIZE THAT PARENTS HAVE THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY TO DIRECT THE UPBRINGING, EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, AND MENTAL HEALTH OF THEIR CHILDREN; TO PROHIBIT THE STATE FROM SUBSTANTIALLY BURDENING THOSE PARENTAL RIGHTS AND TO REQUIRE THE STATE TO OBTAIN PARENTAL CONSENT IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; TO CREATE A CAUSE OF ACTION FOR VIOLATION OF THE CHAPTER; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

- 2/28/2024 - Member(s) request name added as sponsor: S.Jones, White, Magnuson, Harris, Pace, T.Moore

Introduction of Interest

H. 5153: Anderson County School District 2

West

Representatives Jay West (R-Anderson), Anne Thayer (R-Anderson), Don Chapman (R-Anderson), Thomas Beach (R-Anderson), Craig Gagnon (R-Abbeville) and April Cromer (R-Anderson) introduced legislation to replace the two multi-member districts with four single-member residency areas for the election of trustees of Anderson County School District 2 and to redesignate the map number on which these residency areas are delineated.

This bill is currently residing in the House.

H. 5156: Discrimination

Garvin

Representatives Kambrell Garvin (D-Richland), John King (D-York), Gilda Cobb-Hunter (D-Orangeburg), Michael Rivers (D-Beaufort), and Chandra Dillard (D-Greenville) introduced legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin, including discriminating against certain facial features, hair textures, hair types, and hair styles associated with race in matters involving housing, public accommodations, and education.

This bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

[H. 5144: School Mapping Data Program](#)

Cox

Representatives Bobby Cox (R-Greenville) and Jason Elliott (R-Greenville) introduced legislation to create the school mapping data program within the State Department of Education for the purpose of facilitating efficient emergency responses in public schools by public safety agencies. This bill provides requirements for school mapping data, including compatibility with certain software programs and verifiable accuracy. Each school district would be required to pay an annual maintenance fee to update their school map that may not exceed \$650 for each school.

This bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

[H. 5164: Education Scholarship Trust Fund](#)

Erickson

Representative Shannon Erickson (R-Beaufort) and others introduced legislation to remove certain requirements for eligible students to participate in the Education Scholarship Trust Fund program including attending a public school in South Carolina during the previous school year, having a household income that does not exceed 400% of the federal poverty guideline, and not participating in the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children's Fund program. This bill also clarifies that the child of an active-duty military member who has received permanent change of station order in South Carolina is an eligible student and makes charter schools eligible schools for participation.

This bill would change the application process and window by providing additional application processes. It would also require certain information to remain confidential and exempt from disclosure, including personally identifiable information of children applying for or receiving scholarships.

This bill would also revise administration fees, remove provisions allowing the use of qualified third parties to manage accounts and administer related functions, provide for the return of reverted scholarship funds upon termination of a scholarship, revise limitations of scholarships, revise certification renewal requirements, and allow the Department of Education to declare a student instead of a parent ineligible, among other things.

This bill was referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee.

[H. 5168: Kershaw County School District, Reapportioned](#)

Connell

Representatives Ben Connell (R-Kershaw), Cody Mitchell (R-Darlington), Brandon Newton (R-Lancaster), and Will Wheeler (D-Lee) introduced legislation to revise the specific election districts from which members of the Kershaw County School District Board of Trustees are elected, to redesignate the map number on which these districts are delineated, and to provide demographic information for these districts.

This bill is currently residing in the House.

[S. 1108: Preschool Suspension/Expulsion Language](#)

Hutto

Senators Brad Hutto (D-Orangeburg), Katrina Shealy (R-Lexington), and Mike

Reichenbach (R-Florence) introduced legislation to require the Department of Education to make available pre-service and in-service professional development on working with children with challenging behaviors to administrators, teachers, and staff, materials on available resources and working with children with challenging behaviors to parents and caregivers, and technical assistance for districts.

This bill would also require a publicly-funded preschool to make certain attempts to maintain enrollment before expelling or suspending a student for challenging behavior, and require documentation. The Department of Education would be required to collect certain data concerning publicly-funded preschool suspension and expulsion.

This bill was referred to the Senate Education Committee.

[S. 1115: Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Program](#)

Williams

Senators Kent Williams (D-Marion), Gerald Malloy (D-Darlington), Mike Fanning (D-Fairfield), Nikki Setzler (D-Lexington), and Vernon Stephens (D-Orangeburg) introduced legislation to establish the Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Program in South Carolina and establish goals for the program to promote early childhood literacy. The program would be available statewide and use a home-based or center-based educational technology program and family engagement to develop school readiness skills of preschool children. The program would include individualized software instruction in reading, mathematics, and science, a multisensory reading tutoring program, and a validated adaptive reading test. This bill provides contractor requirements, as well as enrollment and reporting requirements and recruitment plans.

This bill was referred to the Senate Education Committee.

[S. 1122: Cursive Writing Coursework](#)

Young

Senator Tom Young (R-Aiken) and others introduced legislation to require that cursive writing instruction begin in second grade and continue in third, fourth, and fifth grade.

This bill was referred to the Senate Education Committee.

