

CONSOLIDATED ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR 2025-2026

NOTE: *Schools and school districts that chose to be accredited through the South Carolina Department of Education (Option 1) are responsible for demonstrating compliance with the following Accreditation Standards [R.43-300]. These Accreditation Standards are not exclusive of all requirements, so there may be additional provisions in the South Carolina Code of Laws, State Board of Education (SBE) Regulations, and SC Department of Education (SCDE) policies that require adherence.*

I. PERSONNEL

A. BOARD MEMBERS

1. The board of trustees exercises the general powers and duties as prescribed statutory requirements. [§59-19-90]
2. It shall be unlawful for a school trustee to receive pay as a teacher of a free public school that is located in the same school district of which such person is a trustee. [§59-19-300]
3. No person who is a member of a board of trustees or the immediate family of a member of the board of trustees of any school district should be employed by the board as a teacher without the written approval of the board of trustees of the district. [§59-25-10]
4. Within one year of taking office, all persons elected or appointed as members of a school district board of trustees shall successfully complete an orientation program in the powers, duties, and responsibilities of a board member. [§59-19-45]
5. Failure by any school district to develop affirmative action plans or otherwise adhere to the provisions of the South Carolina Education Improvement Act of 1984 is cause for intervention by the SCDE to take corrective steps as may be necessary. [§59-1-520]
6. The board of trustees reports termination of certain district employees to the SBE and the State Superintendent. [R. 43-58.1]

B. SUPERINTENDENT

1. Each school district shall employ a superintendent who serves as the executive officer of the board of trustees and the professional leader of the school district. [§59-13-10, §59-13-30, R. 43-161]
2. Administrators serving as district superintendents shall hold a superintendent's certificate. [§59-13-20, R. 43-161]

C. ADDITIONAL CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF

1. Personnel employed as administrative assistants, supervisors, and consultants having responsibilities for supervising instructional programs and student services must hold a master's degree and certified in their area of primary responsibility or must earn a minimum of six semester hours annually toward appropriate certification. The district superintendent must request from the Office of Educator Services a certification permit for members of the central staff who are not properly certified. [R. 43-205, R. 43-50]

D. ALL EMPLOYEES

1. Each individual employed in an instructional, classroom teaching position or who serves in a position designed for the support of the instructional program in a public school of this state must hold an appropriate South Carolina teaching credential. [R. 43-50]
2. The licensing of related educational professionals in the areas of Audiology, Nursing, and

Social Work are remanded to the established licensing boards. [R. 43-50]

- a. A licensed practical nurse who is working under the supervision of a professional registered nurse. [R. 43-205]
3. No person will be initially hired to work in any public or private school, kindergarten, nursery or day care center for infants and children until appropriately evaluated for tuberculosis. [§44-29-150, §44-29-160, R. 43-207]

E. PRINCIPAL(S)/DIRECTORS(S)

1. Each school must be staffed with a full-time properly certified principal/director. [R. 43-205]
 - a. Elementary schools with an enrollment of fewer than 375 students must be staffed with at least a part-time properly certified principal. [R. 43-205]
 - b. Middle Schools with fewer than 250 students enrolled must be staffed at least a half-time properly certified principal. [R. 43-205]
2. Each school district shall provide a formalized induction program for first time school principals. Appropriate documentation is maintained by the district to verify the evaluation process. [§59-24-80, R. 43-165.1]
3. The principal/director has completed a professional development plan with annual updates. [§59-24-30]

F. ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL(S)/ASSISTANT DIRECTOR(S) AND/OR CURRICULUM COORDINATOR(S)

1. Each high school with an enrollment of 400 to 499 students must be staffed with at least one half-time properly certified assistant principal or the equivalent. [R. 43-205]
2. Each elementary and middle school with an enrollment of 500 or more students must be staffed with at least one full-time properly certified assistant principal and a properly certified assistant principal for each additional 500 students. [R. 43-205]
3. An additional properly certified assistant principal or curriculum coordinator must be employed for a middle school with an enrollment of 1,000 or more. [R. 43-205]
4. Assistant principals/directors or curriculum coordinators shall develop an on-going professional development plan with annual updates. [§59-24-30]

G. TEACHERS

1. A teacher education candidate shall undergo state criminal records check by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division and a national criminal records check, supported by fingerprints, by the FBI. [§59-25-115, R. 43-51]
2. Teachers must meet the applicable certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification. [§59-25-20, 20 USCA §6601, et seq. (2015), R. 43-50, R. 43-205, Proviso 1.63]
3. Each child development classroom shall be staffed with one appropriately certified teacher. [R. 43-264.1]
4. For the current fiscal year, a teacher certified at the secondary level may teach such courses in grades seven through twelve without having the add on certification for middle-level education. [R. 43-62, Proviso 1.63]

H. SCHOOL COUNSELOR(S)

1. Each school counselor must be properly certified by the SBE. [§59-25-20, R.43-50, R.43-205]
2. Schools having any combination of grades kindergarten through five must employ the

full-time equivalent of a school counselor in ratios in accordance with regulatory requirements. [R. 43-205]

3. Schools having any combination of grades six through eight or nine through twelve must employ the full-time equivalent of a school counselor in the ratios in accordance with regulatory requirements. [R. 43-205]
4. The student-to-school counseling personnel ratio in grades six through twelve will be reduced to 300:1. [§59-59-100, R. 43-205]

I. LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST(S)

1. Each library media specialist must be properly certified by the SBE. [R. 43-205]
2. Schools having any combination of grades kindergarten through five with fewer than 375 students must provide at least half-time services of a certified library media specialist. [R. 43-205]
3. Schools having any combination of grades kindergarten through five with 375 or more students must provide the services of a full-time certified library media specialist. [R. 43-205]
4. Schools having any combination of grades six through twelve with fewer than 400 students must provide the services of a certified library media specialist devoting not less than 200 minutes daily to library media services. [R. 43-205]
5. Schools having any combination of grades six through twelve with more than 400 students must provide the services of a full-time certified media specialist. [R. 43-205]
6. Schools having any combination of grades six through twelve with more than 750 students must provide an additional full-time person (paraprofessional or certified media specialist) in the library media center. [R. 43-205]

J. SCHOOL TRANSITION COORDINATOR(S) AND CAREER SPECIALIST(S)

1. Each school-to-work transition coordinator must be certified or meet all other regulatory requirements. [R. 43-205]
2. Each middle and high school shall provide students with the services of a career specialist. [§59-59-100, R. 43-205]
3. Each career specialist must hold a bachelor's degree and must have earned either Global Career and Development Facilitator certification (GCDF) or Career Development Facilitator certification (CDF). [§59-59-100, R. 43-205]
4. Any career specialist providing classroom instruction must be a properly certified teacher. [§59-25-20, R. 43-205]
5. Each career specialist must work under the supervision of a certified school counselor. [§59-59-100, §59-26-10, R. 43-205]

K. PARAPROFESSIONALS

1. Instructional paraprofessionals who work in Title I school program must meet applicable certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification. [20 USCA §6601, et seq. (2015), R. 43-209]
2. Each teacher of visual, orthopedically, emotionally, or pupils with intellectual disabilities in a self-contained classroom model shall have a paraprofessional full time, provided that the class has a minimum membership of four pupils. [R. 43-205, R. 43-209]
3. When four or more students identified as emotionally or orthopedically disabled are enrolled in a cross-categorical class, a full-time teaching assistant must be employed. [R. 43-205]

4. All instructional paraprofessionals must work under the direct supervision of a certified teacher. [R. 43-209]
5. Teaching assistants shall have at least a high school diploma or the equivalent. [R. 43-209]
6. Each teacher of a kindergarten unit shall have a paraprofessional full-time. [R. 43-209]
7. Each child development classroom shall be staffed with one teaching assistant. [R. 43-264.1]

L. READING/LITERACY COACH

1. A reading/literacy coach should be employed in each elementary school. [§59-155-180(C)(2), Proviso 1.59 (E)]
2. The reading coach must not be assigned a regular classroom teaching assignment, must not perform administrative functions that deter from the flow of improving reading instruction and reading performance of students and must not devote a significant portion of his or her time to administering or coordinating assessments. [§59-155-180(C)(3), Proviso 1.59 (F)]

M. SUBCONTRACTORS - Child Development

1. School districts may contract with appropriate groups and/or agencies to provide part or the entire program. In such cases, the school district is charged with the responsibility of maintaining compliance with the regulations governing this program. [R. 43-264.1]

II. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

A. GENERAL

1. Each school district shall see that in every school under their care there shall be taught, as far as practicable, orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English grammar and instruction in phonics, the elements of agriculture, the history of the United States and of this State, the principles of the Constitutions of the United States and of this State, morals and good behavior, algebra, physiology and hygiene (especially as to the effects of alcoholic liquors and narcotics upon the human system), English literature, and such other branches as the state board may from time to time direct. [§59-29-10]
2. The district complies with all summer school program requirements. [R. 43-240]
3. Gifted and talented students are those who are identified in grades one through twelve as demonstrating high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas and therefore, in order to achieve their potential, require educational programming beyond that normally provided by general school programming. [§59-29-170, R. 43-220]
 - a. Districts will submit a local gifted and talented programming plan every five years and delineate progress on this plan annually. [§59-29-170, R. 43-220]
4. Specialized programs of instruction are provided to students with disabilities. [20 U.S.C. §1400, et seq., R. 43-205, R. 43-243, R. 43-243.1]
5. Students who cannot attend public school because of illness, accident, or pregnancy, even with the aid of transportation, are eligible for medical homebound or hospitalized instruction. [§59-21-540, R. 43-241]
6. The Uniform Grading Policy is used in all public schools in the State. [§59-5-68]
7. Pupils and teachers shall wear an industrial quality eye device while participating in courses necessitating wearing of protective eye devices. [§59-1-390]
8. Each school shall provide adequate first aid supplies and equipment. [R. 43-166]

B. GUIDANCE AND CAREER AWARENESS

1. A comprehensive guidance program including career awareness is provided in any combination of grades kindergarten through fifth. [§59-59-80, R. 43-231]
2. A comprehensive guidance program, including career development, is required in schools having any combination of grades six through eight. [§59-59-90, §59-59-40, §59-59-140, R. 43-232]
3. Beginning in grade six, students and their parents and/or legal guardians, in collaboration with appropriate school personnel, shall prepare a plan for a variety of career options in which the student has an interest. [§59-59-90, §59-59-140, R. 43-232]
4. In grade seven and eight, students and their parents and/or legal guardians, in collaboration with appropriate school personnel, shall revise career planning records in which students have an interest. [§59-59-90, §59-59-140, R. 43-232]
5. Each school district shall offer a range of mentoring opportunities for students beginning no later than seventh grade. [§59-59-140, R. 43-232]
6. All schools encompassing any combination of grades nine through twelve are required to provide a comprehensive school counseling program that is based on grade-specific standards. The standards must address the academic, personal and social, and the career domains. Specifically, students must be provided school counseling and career awareness programs and activities that assist them in developing and fulfilling their individual graduation plans and prepare them for a seamless transition to relevant employment, further training, or postsecondary study. [§59-59-100, §59-59-140, R. 43-234]

C. LIBRARY/MEDIA

1. The library/media program and technology resources are accessible to all students and staff and are appropriate to achieve the strategies and goals in each school renewal and district strategic plan. [R. 43-231, R. 43-232]

D. CURRICULUM

1. A developmental educational program in a child development classroom setting shall be the major component of the program. [§59-139-10, R. 43-264.1]
2. The kindergarten curriculum meets regulatory requirements. [R. 43-231, R. 43-267]
3. A school encompassing any combination of grades kindergarten through fifth may implement an innovative approach if it is approved by the local board of trustees and is incorporated in the school and district plans. [§59-20-60, R. 43-231]
4. Summer Reading Camps must be at least six weeks in duration with a minimum of four days of instruction per week and four hours of instruction per day, or the equivalent minimum hours of instruction in the summer. The camps must be taught by compensated teachers who have at least an add-on literacy endorsement. In the current school year, any student in third grade who substantially fails to demonstrate third- grade reading proficiency by the end of the school year must be offered the opportunity to attend a summer reading camp at no cost to the parent or guardian. [§59-155-160(C)(1), Proviso 1.56]
5. The district schools have implemented a comprehensive health education program in accordance with regulatory and statutory requirements. [§59-32-10, et seq., R. 43-231, R. 43-232, R. 43-234, R. 43-238]
 - a. Each district shall publish on its website the title and publisher of all health education materials it has adopted and used in the classroom. [Proviso 1.48]
6. Instruction in the subject areas shall be scheduled for each student for a minimum of 1,800 minutes or 30 hours per week including lunch, or the equivalent time on a yearly basis, for

grades first through fifth. The subject areas shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. English/Language Arts [§59-29-10, R. 43-231]
 - b. Mathematics [§59-29-10, R. 43-231]
 - c. Science [R. 43-231]
 - d. Social Studies
 - i. The public school of the State must instruct students in the history of black people as a regular part of its history and social studies courses. [§59-29-55]
 - e. Health Education [§59-29-10, §59-32-30, R. 43-231, R. 43-238, Proviso 1.48]
 - f. Physical Education [§59-10-10, §59-29-80, R. 43-231]
 - g. Visual/Performing Arts
 - i. Visual and Performing Arts shall include, but not be limited to, music and art. [§59-29-220, R. 43- 231]
 - h. Foreign Language
 - i. Foreign language as a separate course is recommended, but not required. If a separate course is not offered, foreign languages should be incorporated in the basic curriculum. [R. 43-231]
 - i. Alcohol and Drugs
 - i. Through special instruction, schools shall provide age-appropriate instruction regarding the dangers in the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. [§59-29-10, §59-29-20, §59-29-30, R. 43-231]
 - j. Environmental Studies
 - i. Environmental education is offered as an integral part of the science, social studies, and health curricula. [§59-32-30, R. 43-231]
 - k. Program of Safety Instruction
 - i. A definite program of safety instruction shall be included in the curriculum and provided in each primary and elementary grade in the public schools of the State. [§59-29-60]
7. Instruction is provided in the subject areas as specified in the Defined Program, grades six through eight, which include, but are not limited to the following:
- a. English/Language Arts [§59-20-20, R. 43-232]
 - b. Mathematics [§59-20-20, R. 43-232]
 - c. Sciences [§59-20-20, R. 43-232]
 - d. Social Studies [R. 43-232]
 - i. Each public school of the State must instruct students in the history of black people as a regular part of its history and social studies courses. [§59-29-55]
 - ii. Each public school of the State must instruct students in South Carolina history in eighth grade. [R. 43-232]
 - e. Health [§59-32-3, R. 43-232, R. 43-238, Proviso 1.48]
 - f. Physical Education [§59-29-80, R. 43-232]
 - g. Visual/Performing Arts [§59-29-220, R. 43-232,]
 - h. Exploratory
 - i. At least one elective class of an occupational exploratory must be scheduled. Programs in areas such as, but not limited to, industrial technology education (grades seven through eight), keyboarding, computer literacy, and career exploration may be included. [R. 43-232]
 - i. Foreign Language
 - i. Foreign language as a separate course is recommended, but not required.

- If a separate course is not offered, foreign languages should be incorporated in the basic curriculum. [R. 43-232]
- j. Environmental education is offered as an integral part of the science, social studies, and health curricula. [§59-32-30, R. 43-232]
 - k. Alcohol and Drugs
 - i. Schools shall provide age-appropriate instruction regarding the dangers in the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Instruction shall emphasize problems related to their use and effects upon the total community. [§59-29-20, §59-29-30, §59-29-40, R. 43-232]
8. Instruction is provided in the subject areas as specified in the Defined Program, grades nine through twelve, which include, but are not limited to the following:
- a. A student must earn a total of 24 units of credit for a South Carolina High School Diploma. The credits are as follows: [§59-29-10, §59-29-80, §59-29-120, §59-29-160, §59-29-165, §59-39-100, R. 43-234]

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| i. English language arts | 4.0 |
| ii. mathematics | 4.0 |
| iii. science | 3.0 |
| iv. U.S. History and Constitution | 1.0 |
| v. economics | 0.5 |
| vi. U.S. Government | 0.5 |
| vii. other social studies | 1.0 |
| viii. physical education or Junior ROTC | 1.0 |
| ix. computer science | 1.0 |
| x. foreign language or career and technology education | 1.0 |
| xi. electives | 6.5 |
| xii. personal finance | 0.5 |
 - b. Each public school of the State must instruct students in the history of black people as a regular part of its history and social studies courses. [§59-29-55]
 - c. All students of public or charter schools in this state are required to take the civics test as defined as the 100 questions that officers of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services use to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of U.S. history and the principle and form of the U.S. government as part of the U.S. Government requirement. [§59-29-240, R. 43-234]
 - d. The student must pass a classroom examination on the provisions and principles of the U.S. Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist papers, and American institutions and ideals. [§59-29-10, §59-29-120, §59-29-140, §59-29-150, §59-29-155 R. 43-234]
 - e. Physical Education [§59-29-80, R. 43-234]
 - f. Health Education [§59-32-30, R. 43-234, R. 43-238, Proviso 1.48]
 - g. Schools must include environmental studies as part of the instructional program. [§59-32-30, R. 43-234]
 - h. Schools must include financial literacy as a part of the school instructional programs. [§59-29-410, R. 43-234]
 - i. Schools must offer levels one and two of at least one modern or classical foreign language. [R. 43-234]
 - j. Schools must offer courses in the visual and performing arts. [§59-29-220, R. 43-234]
 - k. Schools shall provide age-appropriate instruction regarding the dangers in the use

and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Instruction must emphasize the negative effects that the use of such substances can have on the total community. [§59-29-20, §59-29-30, §59-29-40, R. 43-234]

- l. Schools must provide a complete program of driver education, including classroom and behind-the-wheel phases, each semester on an elective basis for eligible students. [R. 43-234, R. 43-242, Proviso 1.40]
- m. Schools must offer Career and Technology Education (CTE) courses. Students who plan to complete a CTE program must earn at least three units in an approved sequence of CTE courses leading to a career goal. [§59-5-61, §59-5-65, R. 43-234]
- n. Advanced Placement courses are offered in accordance with regulatory requirements. [§59-29-190, R. 43-234, R. 43-258.1]
- o. Each high school shall provide an accelerated program of study whereby any student who demonstrates sufficient ability shall be allowed to undertake such courses of study as will enable the student to graduate at the end of eleven years of primary and secondary schooling. [§59-39-110]
- p. All secondary schools must offer a clearly defined college preparatory program. [§59-5-65]
- q. Each high school shall develop a pre-registration form outlining the courses in which a student may enroll for his/her entire high school career. [§59-59-160, R. 43-272]
- r. All tenth grade students are offered the PSAT or PLAN tests, and the results are used as a diagnostic tool. [§59-18-340, Proviso 1A.17]
- s. All students entering the eleventh grade must be administered a career readiness assessment. [§59-18-325]
- t. A school may award credit for a college course that students take under the district's dual credit arrangement. A three-semester-hour college course transfers as one unit of credit. [R. 43-234]
- u. Graduation Requirements
 - i. To earn a South Carolina High School Diploma, a student must earn 24 units of credit. [§59-39-100, R. 43-234]
 - ii. The student must be enrolled for a minimum of one semester immediately preceding his or her graduation except in cases of bona-fide change of residence. Units earned in a summer school program does not satisfy this requirement. [R. 43-234]

9. CTE

- a. Locally designed CTE courses funded with state or federal CTE monies must be approved by the SCDE's Office of Career and Technology Education. [R. 43-234]
- b. The CTE center has developed, in cooperation with participating high schools, a pre-registration form that outlines the career and technology education courses a student may take in grades nine through twelve. [§59-59-110, R. 43-272]
- c. Courses offered for high school credit at the CTE center, including any approved locally designed courses, are consistent with the Defined Program, grades nine through twelve. [§59-5-65, R. 43-234]
- d. The SBE shall adopt instructional program standards for career and technology programs and a needs assessment format, which includes instructional requirements for the special characteristics of the different career and technology

- programs. [§59-53-1870]
- e. Rigorous, relevant career and technology education programs are provided. [§59-53-1870, R. 43-234]
- f. CTE programs are organized around a career cluster system that provides students with individualized education choices. [§59-59-50, §59-59-60, §59-59-110, R. 43-234]
- g. CTE programs incorporate state-approved course standards, which are competency-based. [§59-53-1870]
- h. Students who plan to complete a CTE program must earn at least three units in an approved sequence of CTE courses leading to a career goal. [§59-5-65, R. 43-234]
- i. The CTE center conducts the annual survey required to determine the placement status of its career and technology education completers and reports the placement results to the school district(s) as required. [R. 43-234]

E. CHILD DEVELOPMENT/EARLY CHILDHOOD

1. Each district shall provide at least one program for four-year-old children and may serve identified three-year old children who have significant readiness deficiencies. [§59-139-10, R. 43-264.1]
2. Districts and schools shall construct and implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum model from pre-school through grade three. [§59-29-10, §59-139-10, R. 43-267]
3. The school district provides a family literacy program that enhances relationships between parents and children, connects the value of literacy development, promotes connections to school, develops knowledge in parenting and child development, and provides support services in the areas of health, nutrition, transportation, childcare, and other related needs. [§59-1-450, §59-139-10, R. 43-265, R. 43-267]

F. AWARDING HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT

1. A school may award one unit of credit for an academic standards-based course that requires a minimum of one hundred-twenty hours of instruction; one-half unit of credit for standards-based course that requires a minimum of sixty hours of instruction; and one-fourth unit of credit for standards-based course that requires a minimum of thirty hours of instruction. [R. 43-234]
2. A school may award credit for courses that have been approved by the SCDE in a proficiency-based system. A proficiency-based course may also be offered for one-fourth, one-half, or one unit if the system specifies these units. Each school district that seeks to implement a proficiency-based system must submit a plan to the SCDE. [R. 43-234]
3. When approved by the principal and the parents, a student promoted to the seventh or eighth grade may take units of ninth grade or higher work for high school credit. The high school courses offered must be limited to courses that are currently in the 9–12 section of the Activity Coding System for the Student Information System except for physical education and health education courses. It is expected that students taking courses for high school credit have been taught and mastered the middle school level standards prior to taking the courses for high school credit. The number of high school credits permitted at the middle school or junior high school level must be determined by the local school district. [R. 43-232]
4. A school may award credit for locally designed courses under the following conditions:

- a. Locally designed subject-area courses must be approved by the local board of trustees and the State Superintendent of Education and aligned with the state academic standards for the particular subject area. [R. 43-234]
 - b. Locally designed elective courses must be approved by the local board of trustees. No more than two units may be awarded to a student for release-time classes in religious instruction. [R. 43-234]
5. A school may award credit if a district-wide or school-site summer school program meets all of the regulatory requirements for the courses offered for students in grades 9–12. [R. 43-234, R. 43-240]
6. A school may award credit toward the high school diploma for a course that the student takes in an approved adult education program if the course is granted approval by the superintendent or his/her designee. [R. 43-234, R. 43-259]
7. A school may award credit for a college course that students take under the district’s dual credit arrangement. A three-semester-hour college course transfers as one unit of credit. [R. 43-234]
8. Units earned by a student in an accredited high school of this state or in a school of another state which is accredited under the regulations of the board of education of that state, or the appropriate regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education will be accepted under the same value which would apply to students in the school to which they transferred. [R. 43-273]
9. Home school, private school, or out-of-state non-public school students shall have the opportunity to provide evidence of work to be considered for honors weighting when transferring to a public school. The district shall have the right to evaluate evidence provided by the parent or student before transcribing the course(s) at honors weight. The receiving school may use the South Carolina Honors Framework criteria to evaluate such evidence and shall make the final decision on whether to award the honors weighting. The SCDE advises districts to adopt a policy for accepting units of credit from home school, private school, or out of-state nonpublic school for consistency. [R. 43-234, R. 43-273]
10. Children are entitled to attend public schools of a school district if a parent’s or legal guardian’s military deployment or call to active duty is more than seventy miles from his residence for a period greater than sixty days. [§59-63-31]

III. OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

A. SCHOOL YEAR

1. The statutory school term is one hundred ninety days annually and shall consist of a minimum of 180 days of instruction. [§59-1-425]
2. Three days must be used for collegial professional development. No more than two days may be used for the preparation of opening of schools and the remaining five days may be used for teacher planning, academic plans, and parent conferences. [§59-1-425]
3. No more than three days of the school year are reduced in instructional time for the purpose of administering end-of-the-semester examinations, end-of-the-year examinations, teacher conferences, or for staff development. The reduced days are not less than three hours in length. [§59-1-425]
4. Early dismissal days for emergencies must be reported to the SCDE. Plans to make-up the missed day(s) must also be reported. [§59-1-425R. 43-231, R. 43-232]
5. All school days missed because of snow, extreme weather conditions, or other disruptions

requiring schools to close must be made up. All school districts shall designate annually at least three days within their school calendars to be used as make up days in the event of these occurrences. If those designated days have been used or are no longer available, the local school board of trustees may lengthen the hours of school operation by no less than one hour per day for the total number of hours missed, operate schools on Saturday or may waive up to three days. A waiver granted by the local board of trustees may only be authorized by a majority vote of the local school board, and may not be granted until the school has made up three full days, or the equivalent number of hours. [§59-1-425, R. 43-231, R. 43-232, R. 43-234]

6. The SBE may waive the requirements of making up days beyond the three days forgiven by the local school district, not to exceed three additional days. [§59-1-425, R. 43-231, R. 43-232, R. 43-234]

B. SCHOOL DAY/WEEK

1. The instructional day for secondary students must be at least six hours a day, or its equivalent weekly, excluding lunch periods. [§59-1-425, R. 43-234]
2. The instructional day for elementary and middle school students at least six hours a day, or its equivalent weekly, including lunch periods. [§59-1-425, R. 43-231, 43-232]
3. Schools may exercise options and vary the number of minutes in the instructional week, provided that such variation meets statutory requirements and is approved by the local board of trustees. [§59-1-425, R. 43-234]
4. The child development classroom program shall be operative five days a week (or the equivalent) for at least two and a half hours of instructional time, exclusive of breakfast, lunch and transportation. [R. 43-264.1]
5. A class period is defined as a minimum of fifty minutes, or an accumulation of the equivalency of one hundred-twenty hours required for a Carnegie Unit of Credit. [R. 43-172]
6. Homeroom periods, announcement times, and administrative activities such as attendance are not counted as part of the instructional day. [R. 43-234]
7. During the instructional day, priority must be given to teaching and learning with class interruptions limited to only emergencies. [§59-1-425]
8. The length of the school day for full-time teachers is a minimum of seven hours. [R. 43-57.1]

C. DISTRICT STRATEGIC AND SCHOOL RENEWAL PLANS

1. Each school district must develop a five-year district strategic plan and each school must develop a five-year school renewal plan. District and schools' plans shall coordinate and align improvement initiatives. [§59-18-1310, §59-20-60(3), R. 43-261]
2. New five-year district and school plans shall be submitted to the SCDE by April 30 and every five years thereafter. The annual update of the district strategic and school renewal plan must be submitted to the SCDE by April 30 of each year. [§59-18-1310, §59-20-60, R. 43-261]
3. The district strategic plan, school renewal plans, and annual updates must be reviewed and approved by the local board of trustees and coordinate funding from local, state, federal, and private sources. [§59-20-60(3), §59-139-10, et seq., R. 43-261]
4. The district strategic plan includes the accountability system that directs the annual needs assessment; prioritizes the performance goals; and reports how the district supports schools, students, and families. [§59-20-60, §59-139-5, et seq., R. 43-261]
5. By November 15th of each year, the local school board must develop an annual district

programmatic report to the parents and constituents. Each report shall include the goals and objectives of the school district, the strategies implemented to meet the goals and objectives, and an evaluation of the outcomes. [§59-20-60]

D. DISTRICT WEBSITES

1. Each school district should maintain information on the district website content based on state and federal requirements. [§23-3-535(F)(1)(b), §59-18-900]
2. Each local school district must prominently post on the district's website and make available for public viewing and downloading the most recent version of the school district's policy manual and administrative rule manual. [Proviso 1.29]
3. School districts must have a website and shall place a notice of a regularly scheduled school board meeting twenty-four hours in advance of such meeting. The notice shall include the date, time, and agenda for the board meeting. The school district shall place the minutes of the board meeting on their website within ten days of the next regularly scheduled board meeting. [§59-19-80, Proviso 1.22]
4. School districts must report the amount of funds spent on administrative costs, as defined by In\$ight in the prior fiscal year and post the report on the district's website. The register must be prominently posted on the district's internet website and made available for public viewing and downloading. [§59-18-900, Proviso 1.24]
5. Each school district must maintain on its website a copy of each monthly statement for all the credit cards maintained by the entity, including credit cards issued to its employees for official use. The credit card number on each statement must be redacted prior to posting on the internet website. Each credit card statement must be posted no later than the thirtieth day after the first date that any portion of the balance due as soon the statement is paid. [Provisos 1.24, 1A.14]
6. Each school district must provide (a) the names and addresses of every sex offender who resides within one thousand feet of a school bus stop within the school district to the parents or guardians of a student who boards or disembarks a school bus at a stop, or (b) the hyperlink to the sex offender registry website on the school district's website for the purpose of gathering this information. [§23-3-535(F)(1)(a-b)]
7. Annual report cards for individual primary, elementary, middle, high schools, and school districts must be published on the school and district websites. [§59-18-900(A)]
8. School districts must maintain a transaction register that includes a complete record of all funds expended over one hundred dollars, from whatever source, for whatever purpose. [§59-18-900, Provisos 1.24, 1A.24]

E. FINANCE

1. Financial resources are to be allocated, expended, and accounted for in accordance with accounting practices specified in the Financial Accounting Handbook, Funding Manual, and the Pupil and Staff Accountability Manual. [§59-20-60, R. 43-172]
2. The district board of trustees makes its annual fiscal report available to the public. [§59-20-60, Proviso 1.24]
3. School districts must maintain a transaction register that includes a complete record of all funds expended over one hundred dollars, from whatever source, for whatever purpose. The register must be prominently posted on the district's internet website and made available for public viewing and downloading. [§59-20-60, Provisos 1.24]
4. The board of trustees prepares an annual written report accounting for funds expended in each pupil classification. [§59-20-60(7)(b)]

5. No teacher or other employee shall be employed or any purchase made except in a duly called meeting of the board, of which meeting each member has been notified in writing by the clerk of the board at least three days in advance thereof, unless a written waiver of such notice of meeting is signed by each member of the board, and unless such action or the memoranda of the terms of any such contract of employment or purchase shall be duly recorded in the minutes of such meeting and approved by the board. [§59-19-80]
6. School districts shall provide the SCDE with two copies of its audit report by December 1st following the close of the fiscal year. [§59-17-100]
7. Financial records are audited annually by a certified or licensed public accountant. [§59-20-60, R. 43-172]
8. Child development expenditures must adhere to definitions and guidelines established by the SCDE Office of Finance, or the State Procurement Code. [R. 43-264.1]

F. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCILS

1. Each district board of trustees shall establish an Improvement Council at each school in the district, and this council is to be involved in improvement, innovation efforts, and other duties as specified by law. [§59-20-60]
2. The School Improvement Council (SIC) must actively participate in the development of the school renewal plan and annual updates. [§59-20-60, R. 43-261]
3. By November 15th of each year, the SIC provides to parents and constituents a report on the school's progress in meeting school and district goals and objectives. [§59-20-60]

G. DISASTER PLANS AND SCHOOL DRILLS

1. A plan shall be designed to provide for the protection and welfare of students in the event of any disaster which threatens to involve the school community. [R. 43-166]
2. Each school shall conduct at least one emergency drill within the first month of school. [§59-63-910, R. 43-166]
3. All schools shall conduct fire drills at least once each month. [§59-63-910]
4. All schools, including charter schools whose instruction is not primarily delivered online, shall conduct fire, active shooter/intruder, and severe weather/earthquake drills. Within each school year, schools must conduct at least two fire drills, two active shooter/intruder drills, and two severe weather/earthquake drills, with at least one of each drill conducted each semester. [§59-63-910(A)]

H. SCHOOL FACILITIES

1. All operating school facilities shall comply with sanitation and health regulations prescribed by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. [§59-31-330, R. 43-237.1]
2. All operating school facilities shall comply with safety regulations prescribed by the State Fire Marshall. [§5-25-370, §5-25-390, §5-25-400]

I. RECORD KEEPING

1. All school district must report the student-teacher ratio for every classroom to SCDE at the 45th and 135th day mark. [Provisos 1.24 and 1A.14]
2. Each school district must file a record of all dropouts that specifies for every student the name of the school in which he or she was enrolled and gives the following information on the student: his or her name, grade, race, sex, date of birth, free/reduced meals status, English proficiency status, and migrant status. Each district superintendent must verify the

- accuracy of the student enrollment, attendance, membership by category, and dropout reports submitted to the SCDE's Office of Finance. [§59-65-470R. 43-234, R. 43-172, R. 43-231]
3. Each district superintendent must verify the accuracy of the student enrollment, attendance, membership by category, and dropout reports submitted to the SCDE's Office of Finance. [R. 43-231, R. 43-232, R. 43-234]
 4. Each district must maintain and verify the data and course records for students according to the pupil accounting systems prescribed by the SCDE. [R. 43-234]
 - a. Each school must have an appropriate means of reporting academic achievement to parents. [§59-18-930, R. 43-231, R. 43-234]
 5. Graduation rates must be used as an additional accountability measure for high schools and school districts. (If a high school has a graduation rate below 60%, the board of trustees must provide a report detailing a plan to increase the graduation rate in accordance with the provisions of the EAA to the SBE.) [§59-18-900(B)(3), Proviso 1.61]
 6. The district maintains accurate records related to pupil bus transportation in accordance with the SCDE's transportation manual. [R. 43-80]
 7. An annual district programmatic report to the parents and constituents of the school district must be developed by the local school board. Each report shall include the goals and objectives of the school district, the strategies implemented to meet the goals and objectives, and an evaluation of the outcomes. An annual school report to the parents and constituents of the school must be developed by the SIC and shall provide information on the school's progress on meeting the school and district goals and objectives. These reports shall be provided by November 15th of each year. [§59-20-60]
 8. Each student transferring shall be given a transfer form showing name, date of birth, grade placement, and attendance record to present to the appropriate school official where he or she is enrolling. Appropriate additional data shall be furnished by the sending school when requested in writing by the receiving school, as soon as possible but no later than 10 business days upon receiving the written request, excluding weekends and recognized state holidays. Accurate accounting records shall be developed and maintained for student transfers and withdrawals. Comprehensive transcripts shall be submitted directly to the receiving school when requested in writing, as soon as possible, but no later than 10 business days upon receiving the written request, excluding weekends and recognized state holidays. A permanent record of the transferred student shall be retained in the school from which the student is transferred. The school of record must transfer a student's disciplinary record of suspensions and expulsions to the public or private school to which the student is transferring as soon as possible, but no later than ten business days upon receiving the written request, excluding weekends and recognized state holidays. Schools may not withhold the transfer of records to a public or private school for fees owed by the student. [§59-63-420, R. 43-273]
 9. A report of previous year graduates post-high school education or employment status is submitted to the State Department of Education by May 1 each year. [R. 43-234, Proviso 1.61]
 10. Immunization records are current for each student. Records of vaccinations or immunizations must be maintained by the institution, school, or day care facility to which the child or person has been admitted. [§44-29-180]

J. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

1. Each school district board of trustees shall provide a program of staff development for all educational personnel. [§59-20-60]
2. Three days must be used for collegial professional development and must address, at a minimum, academic achievement standards including strengthening teachers' knowledge in their content area, teaching techniques, and assessment. [§59-1-425, §59-18-300]
3. A staff development program has been implemented that meets national professional development standards, and provides participants the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the strategies. Coordination of funding is from local, state, federal, and private sources. [§59-20-60, R. 43-261]
 - a. Staff development activities shall be described and incorporated in the school or district's comprehensive plan as required by the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act of 1993 (ACT 135), SBE Regulations, and guidelines. [§59-139-5, et seq., R. 43-264.1]

K. STUDENTS

1. A parent or guardian whose child is not six years of age on or before the first day of September may elect for their child not to attend kindergarten. The parent or guardian shall sign a written document making the election with the school district in which the parent or guardian resides.
2. The board of trustees of each school district may establish and provide for the education of children who will attain the age of four on or before September 1st of the applicable school year in child development programs. [§59-139-10]
3. Students are enrolled in accordance with state laws pertaining to age of attendance and qualifications for attendance. [§59-63-20, §59-63-30, §59-63-31, §59-65-10]
 - a. The schools' attendance policy conforms to the state's definitions of lawful and unlawful absences. [§59-65-10, R. 43-274]
 - b. The district board of trustees or its designee(s) shall approve or disapprove any student's absence in excess of ten days, whether lawful or unlawful, for students in grades kindergarten through twelve. [§59-65-90, R. 43-274]
 - c. Intervention plans are initiated for students (ages 6-17) who accrue three consecutive unlawful absences or five cumulative unlawful absences. The intervention plans must contain the minimum elements stated in regulation. [§59-65-90, R. 43-274]
 - d. Family court referrals are made if the intervention is not successful and further inquiries by school officials fail. [§59-65-50, R. 43-274]
 - e. Districts must use diagnostic assessments to determine students' strengths and needs in core academic areas and implement specific, objective criteria to identify students who are not yet performing at grade level. [§59-59-150, R. 43-274.1]
4. District policies have been developed addressing minimum standards of student conduct and discipline. [§59-63-210 et seq., R. 43-279]
5. Policies include provisions regarding expulsion for no less than one year of a student who brings a firearm to school. [§59-63-235]
6. District policies have been developed pertaining to student participation in interscholastic competition is in accordance with regulatory and statutory requirements. [§59-63-100, R. 43-244, R. 43-244.1]
7. The school district shall develop guidelines and procedures regarding the identification and management of suspected concussions in student athletes per statutory requirements. [§59-63-75]

L. TEACHER CLASSLOADS/PREPARATIONS

1. Early Childhood and Elementary School – Grades PK-5

- a. Maximum class size for grades PK-5 shall not exceed the following:
 - i. Child Development/ Prekindergarten 20:1
 - ii. Grades K–3 30:1
 - iii. Grades 4–5 30:1(English/language arts and math)
 - iv. Grades 4–5 35:1(all other subjects)[R. 43-205, R. 43-231, R. 43-264.1]
- b. The average pupil-teacher ratio in any school PK-5 shall not exceed 28:1 based on average daily membership. The total number of teachers shall include all regular, special area, and resource teachers whose pupils are counted in the regular membership. [R. 43-231]
- c. Each district shall attain an average pupil-teacher ratio based on average daily membership in the basic skills of reading and mathematics in Grades 1-3 as 21:1. [R. 43-231].
- d. The student to certified physical education teacher ratio in the elementary schools must be 500:1. [§59-10-20]
- e. PE teachers may teach a maximum of 40 students per class period. The total teaching load must not exceed two hundred forty students per day. If PE and health is taught on alternate days by the same teacher to the same class, the 40 student maximum and 240 student totals are also permitted for health. When health is taught as a separate subject; the teaching load is a maximum of 35 students per period and a total of 150 students per day. [43-205]
- f. Music teachers may teach a maximum of 40 students per class period. The total teaching load must not exceed 240 students per day, except when band, chorus, and orchestra require rehearsal of their entire enrollment. [R. 43-205]
- g. The teaching load for teachers of self-contained classes must not exceed the following student-teacher ratios: [R. 43-205]

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u> |
|---|--|
| i. Mild Intellectual Disabilities | 15:1 |
| ii. Emotional Disabilities | 12:1 |
| iii. Learning Disabilities | 15:1 |
| iv. Moderate and Severe Disabilities and Orthopedically Impairment | 12:1 |
| v. Visually Impairment | 10:1 |
| vi. Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 10:1 |

- h. The teaching load for teachers of cross-categorical self-contained classes must not exceed the following student-teacher ratios: [R. 43-205]

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u> |
|--|--|
| i. Mild Intellectual Disabilities and Learning Disabilities | 15:1 |
| ii. Mild Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, and Emotional Disabilities | 12:1 |
| iii. Mild Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disabilities, and Orthopedically Impairment | 12:1 |

- i. The max teaching load required for resource and itinerant teachers for students with

disabilities based on the average daily enrollment is as follows: [R. 43-205]

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u> |
|--|--|
| i. Mild Intellectual Disabilities | 33 students |
| ii. Emotional Disabilities | 33 students |
| iii. Learning Disabilities | 33 students |
| iv. Moderate and Severe Disabilities and Orthopedically Impairment | 20 students |
| v. Visually Impairment | 15 students |
| vi. Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 15 students |
| j. When resource teachers and/or itinerant teachers serve students with differing disabilities, the maximum teaching load must be determined by the majority of the students in enrollment in an area of disability. [R. 43-205] | |

2. Middle School – Grades 6-8

- a. The maximum daily teaching load shall not exceed 150 students daily.
[R. 43-232, R. 43-205]
- b. Maximum class size in grades 6-8 shall not exceed the following:
[R. 43-232, R. 43-205]

| | | |
|------------|------|---|
| Grade 6 | 30:1 | (English/language arts and math) |
| | 35:1 | (other subjects) |
| Grades 7-8 | 35:1 | (all academic and exploratory subjects) |
- c. No class exceeds 35 students in membership with exceptions provided for physical education and music teachers. If PE and health are taught on alternate days by the same teacher to the same class, the 40 student maximum and 240 student total is also permitted for health. [R. 43-232, R. 43-205]
- d. When health is taught as a separate subject, the teaching load is a maximum of 35 students per period and a total of 150 students per day. [R. 43-232, R. 43-205]
- e. No music teacher's daily student load exceeds 240 students per day.
[R. 43-232, R. 43-205]
- f. When band, chorus, or orchestra require rehearsals for the entire membership, any number of students is acceptable if adequate space is available.
[R. 43-232, R. 43-205]
- g. The teaching load for teachers of self-contained classes must not exceed the following student-teacher ratios: [R. 43-205]

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u> |
|---|--|
| i. Mild Intellectual Disabilities | 18:1 |
| ii. Emotional Disabilities | 15:1 |
| iii. Learning Disabilities | 18:1 |
| iv. Moderate and Severe Disabilities and Orthopedically Impaired | 15:1 |
| v. Visually Impaired | 12:1 |
| vi. Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 12:1 |
| h. Cross-categorical classes must not exceed the following student-teacher ratios: [R. 43-205] | |

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u> |
|---|--|
| i. Mild Intellectual Disabilities and Learning Disabilities | 18:1 |

- ii. Mild Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities,
and Emotional Disabilities 15:1
- iii. Mild Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities,
Emotional Disabilities, and Orthopedically Impaired 15:1
- i. The maximum teaching load for resource teachers and itinerant teachers for
student with disabilities based on average daily enrollment is as follows:
[R. 43-205]

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u> |
|---|--|
| i. Mild Intellectual Disabilities | 33 students |
| ii. Emotional Disabilities | 33 students |
| iii. Learning Disabilities | 33 students |
| iv. Moderate and Severe Disabilities and Orthopedically Impaired | 20 students |
| v. Visually Impaired | 15 students |
| vi. Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 15 students |

3. High School – Grades 9-12

- a. The maximum daily teaching load for teachers of academic classes is 150 students.
No class may exceed 35 students in enrollment with the exceptions provided for
physical education and music teachers, which is a maximum of 40 students per
class. [R. 43-205, R. 43-234]
- b. When band, chorus, or orchestra require rehearsals of the entire membership, any
number of students is acceptable if adequate space is available.
[R. 43-205, R. 43-234]
- c. A teacher must not teach more than 1,500 minutes weekly. [R. 43-205]
- d. A teacher must not be assigned classes requiring more than four preparations per
day. [R. 43-205]
- e. When a teacher's daily schedule includes a combination of academic and
nonacademic subjects, the maximum daily teaching load is calculated on the basis
of 30 students per academic class and 40 students per each music or physical
education class. [R. 43-205, R. 43-234]
- f. The teaching load for teachers of self-contained classes must not exceed the
following student-teacher ratios: [R. 43-205]

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u> |
|---|--|
| i. Mild Mental Disabilities | 18:1 |
| ii. Emotional Disabilities | 15:1 |
| iii. Learning Disabilities | 18:1 |
| iv. Moderate and Severe Disabilities and Orthopedically Impaired | 15:1 |
| v. Visually Impaired | 12:1 |
| vi. Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 12:1 |

- g. Cross-categorical classes must not exceed the following student-teacher ratios:

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u> |
|--|--|
| i. Mild Intellectual Disabilities and Learning Disabilities | 18:1 |
| ii. Mild Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, and Emotional Disabilities | 17:1 |

iii. Mild Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities,
Emotional Disabilities, and Orthopedically Impaired 16:1

- h. The maximum teaching load for resource teachers and itinerant teachers for students with disabilities based on average daily enrollment is as follows:

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u> |
|---|--|
| i. Mild Intellectual Disabilities | 33 students |
| ii. Emotional Disabilities | 33 students |
| iii. Learning Disabilities | 33 students |
| iv. Moderate and Severe Disabilities and Orthopedic Impairment | 20 students |
| v. Visual Impairment | 15 students |
| vi. Deaf and Hard of Hearing | 15 students |

- i. The caseload for speech/language therapist does not exceed sixty. [R. 43-205]
 - j. When resource teachers and/or itinerant teachers serve students with differing disabilities, the maximum teaching load must be determined by the majority of the students in enrollment in an area of disability. [R. 43-205]
4. The maximum caseload for speech-language therapists does not exceed 60 students. [R. 43-205]
 5. When resource teachers and/or itinerant teachers serve students with differing disabilities, the maximum teaching load must be determined by the majority of the students in enrollment in an area of disability. [R. 43-205]