



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Phillip Cease
Director of Governmental Affairs

DATE: June 20, 2023

RE: 2023 Legislative Session Recap

SCDE's Office of Governmental Affairs closely monitors legislation impacting public education. Below is a summary of the legislation that has passed in this first year of the two-year legislative session.

For more information, please contact Phillip Cease at 803-734-0183 or phcease@ed.sc.gov.

H.3797 (Military Temporary Remote School Enrollment) – Requires school districts to electronically accept applications for enrollment and course registration for students whose parents or legal guardians are transferred, or pending transfer, to a military installation within South Carolina. Outlines what counts as proof of residence under the new law.

H.3908 (Paid Parental Leave for Educators) – Establishes paid parental leave for full time school district employees. The Department has issued an FAQ (drawn extensively from the Department of Administration's prior guidance for state employees) for this policy [here](#).

H.4122 (Administration of lifesaving medication in schools) – Allows school nurses and other designated school personnel to administer lifesaving medications, including but not limited to Narcan. Also allows the Director of Public Health for DHEC to issue a standing order for the administration of these medications. The Department of Education and DHEC will be issuing guidance in the near future.

H. 4300 and H.4301 (2023 – 2024 Appropriations Bill and Capital Reserve Fund Bill) – Both chambers adopted the conference committee report last week which now must be approved by the Governor. Any budget vetoes must be issued by midnight on June 20th. This year saw a significant investment in public education, with approximately \$600 million in new spending:

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\$319 million in recurring spending and \$281 million in one-time funds. This represents a 7% year-over-year increase in recurring state education funding from FY22-23 to FY23-24.

Included in the budget is \$324 million to increase the minimum teacher salary scale by \$2,500 per cell, \$17 million for bus driver raises, \$30 million for instructional materials, \$29 million for school buses, \$39 million for literacy (LETRS) training for K-3 and SPED teachers, \$70 million in capital funding for schools, \$20 million for school district consolidation, \$20 million for school safety upgrades, \$17.5 million for SDE's Innovation Grants Committee, \$15 million for high-intensity tutoring, \$9 million for CTE, \$6 million for Computer Science and AI, and \$3 million to increase the Teacher Supply stipend from \$300 to \$350 per teacher

This budget will go into effect July 1, 2023. Additional details regarding several of these budget lines will be provided in the coming weeks.

S. 39 (Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program) – Allows participating families to use funds in their scholarship account for qualifying expenses at Department-approved public or independent schools. Allowable expenses include tuition and fees of an education service provider, tutoring services, and transportation fees. The application portal for families will open on January 15, 2024. The Department has issued an FAQ for this program [here](#).

S.256 (Sunscreen at School) – Directs that public and charter schools may not prohibit students' possession or use of sunscreen.

Other Legislation of Note

The SDE has received questions from districts regarding H.3728. This bill has passed both the House and Senate but has not yet become law. A conference committee has been appointed to reconcile House/Senate differences. Should the bill be enacted, the provisions would take effect for the 2024-2025 school year. The following description outlines key provisions of the bill as currently written: these may change in conference committee.

H. 3728 (South Carolina Transparency and Integrity in Education Act) – Defines “prohibited concepts” that may not be included or promoted in public schools. Directs the SDE to develop model lesson plans, create a standardized complaint form, and develop a policy for procedures used to report and investigate alleged violations. Establishes criteria for LEAs to comply with provisions of the bill. Establishes an appeals process for parents and educators to the State Board of Education.