

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
District PIOs
District Personnel Administrators

FROM: Phillip Cease
Director of Government Relations and Policy

DATE: May 20, 2025

RE: 2025 Legislative Session Recap

SCDE's Office of Government Relations and Policy closely monitors legislation impacting public education. Below is a summary of legislation that passed this year. As a reminder, this year was the first year of a two-year session. Any bills that did not pass this year will remain in the same position when the legislature reconvenes in January.

For more information, please contact Phillip Cease at phcease@ed.sc.gov.

S. 62 (Education Scholarship Trust Fund) – Amends code to update the Education Scholarship Trust Fund. The new law requires that the Superintendent of Education appoint a trustee to manage scholarship funds, increases the individual scholarship amount from \$6,000 to \$7,500, raises the income cap from 400 percent of poverty to 500 percent of poverty, and requires the Department develop model guidelines for interdistrict transfers. In developing the model guidelines for interdistrict transfers, the Department will solicit input from stakeholders.

S. 77 (School Board Streaming) – Amends code to require school districts, including charter schools, to livestream and record all school board meetings. The State Board of Education is required to adopt a model livestream meeting policy to comply with the provisions of S. 77. Within three months of the State Board of Education adoption of the model policy, districts shall adopt a local policy which, at a minimum, must include the State Board model policy. The provisions in this bill must be implemented by January 1, 2026.

S. 78 (Work Experience Credit for Educators) – Amends code to allow educators to receive years of experience on their educator certificate for non-teaching occupational experience in, or related to, the content field of the individual’s certificate. Years of experience awarded only apply to the teacher salary schedule and do not apply for calculating retirement. The Department of Education has one hundred-eighty-days after the Governor signed the bill to develop guidelines.

S. 79 (Noncertified Teacher Pilot Program) – Establishes a pilot program allowing districts to hire noncertified teachers for up to 10% of their entire teaching staff. This pilot does not include work-based, career, and technical education teachers. The State Board of Education will approve guidelines for the pilot program. Unless extended by the legislature, this pilot will end on June 30, 2030.

S. 269 (Private Security Services in Public Schools) – Amends code to allow public school districts and charter schools to establish a proprietary security business. Additionally, it establishes the application process for the school districts or charter schools and the certification process for school security officers employed by the district.

S. 425 (School Meals for Students in Poverty) – Codifies proviso 1.67 in the FY 2024-2025 budget. School districts are required to identify the number of students who live in poverty and increase access to free school breakfast and lunch to those students among other requirements.

H. 3196 (Educator Assistance Act) – Amends code to require districts to implement sick leave banks for all school staff, establishes a lifetime certificate for retired educators, updates the teacher contract and class assignment process, and increases the required number of in-district professional development days from three to four (two of these days must be designated as staff work days in preparation of school starting). Additionally, districts must award credit toward educator certificate renewal based on successful completion of annual professional development. The SCDE will provide guidance to districts concerning professional development plans for educators and updates to the Retired Educator certificate. All sections of this bill, except for one, go into effect July 1, 2025. The remaining section, dealing with contract notification penalties, goes into effect July 1, 2026.

H. 3247 (Excused School Absences) – Amends code to require school districts to adopt a policy that excuses students, for up to ten school days per school year, to participate in certain Career and Technical Student Organization experiences. These include, but are not limited to, scheduled events of state-level Future Farmers of American (FFA), the national

FFA, and 4-H programs. Students are responsible for obtaining and completing assignments that are missed because of participation in these experiences.

H. 3862 (Charter School Enrollment Preferences) – Amends code to allow charter schools to give enrollment preference to dependents of active-duty members of the military residing or stationed in South Carolina. Students who receive this enrollment preference may not exceed 10 percent of the school’s total enrollment.