CHAPTER 19

School Trustees

Article 1

General Provisions

**SECTION 59-19-10. School district management.**

 Each school district shall be under the management and control of the board of trustees provided for in this article, subject to the supervision and orders of the county board of education.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-221; 1952 Code § 21-221; 1942 Code § 5328; 1932 Code § 5354; Civ. C. '22 § 2601; Civ. C. '12 § 1740; Civ. C. '02 § 1206; 1896 (21) 162; 1919 (31) 78.

**SECTION 59-19-20. Composition of boards of school trustees; terms.**

 Unless it be specially provided otherwise by law, the boards of school trustees in this State shall be composed of three members, each of whom when appointed, pursuant to the terms hereof, shall hold office for a term of three years.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-222; 1952 Code § 21-222; 1942 Code § 5343; 1932 Code § 5369; Civ. C. '22 § 2615; Civ. C. '12 § 1752; Civ. C. '02 § 1210; 1903 (23) 64; 1904 (23) 528; 1906 (24) 31; 1914 (28) 480, 567; 1915 (29) 106; 1917 (30) 306; 1918 (30) 3; 1919 (31) 209, 212, 653; 1920 (31) 837; 1921 (32) 93; 1922 (32) 768, 784; 1926 (34) 1017; 1927 (35) 244, 259; 1928 (35) 1197; 1930 (36) 1307, 1518, 1960; 1933 (38) 493; 1937 (40) 235, 579.

**SECTION 59-19-30. Appointment of members.**

 The original trustees having been appointed for terms of one, two and three years, respectively, the county boards of education shall, during the first week of April in each year, appoint one trustee for each district from the qualified electors and taxpayers residing in the district for which the appointment is made to succeed the trustee whose term expires during that year and to serve with the holdover members until his successor has been appointed and qualified.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-223; 1952 Code § 21-223; 1942 Code § 5343; 1932 Code § 5369; Civ. C. '22 § 2615; Civ. C. '12 § 1752; Civ. C. '02 § 1210; 1903 (23) 64; 1904 (23) 528; 1906 (24) 31; 1914 (28) 480, 567; 1915 (29) 106; 1917 (30) 306; 1918 (30) 3; 1919 (31) 209, 212, 653; 1920 (31) 837; 1921 (32) 93; 1922 (32) 768, 784; 1926 (34) 1017; 1927 (35) 244, 259; 1928 (35) 1197; 1930 (36) 1307, 1518, 1960; 1933 (38) 493; 1937 (40) 235, 579.

**SECTION 59-19-40. Appointment of members; special provisions not superseded by Section 59-19-30.**

 The provisions of Section 59-19-30 shall neither repeal, supersede nor annul any special act providing for the appointment or election of school trustees in any school district or in any of the several counties of the State.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-224; 1952 Code § 21-224; 1942 Code § 5343; 1932 Code § 5369; Civ. C. '22 § 2615; Civ. C. '12 § 1752; Civ. C. '02 § 1210; 1903 (23) 64; 1904 (23) 528; 1906 (24) 31; 1914 (28) 480, 567; 1915 (29) 106; 1917 (30) 306; 1918 (30) 3; 1919 (31) 209, 212, 653; 1920 (31) 837; 1921 (32) 93; 1922 (32) 768, 784; 1926 (34) 1017; 1927 (35) 244, 259; 1928 (35) 1197; 1930 (36) 1307, 1518, 1960; 1933 (38) 493; 1937 (40) 235, 579.

**SECTION 59-19-45. Mandatory orientation for school district boards of trustees and county boards of education; exceptions.**

 (A) Within one year of taking office, all persons elected or appointed as members of a school district board of trustees after July 1, 1997, shall complete successfully an orientation program in the powers, duties, and responsibilities of a board member including, but not limited to, topics on policy development, personnel, superintendent and board relations, instructional programs, district finance, school law, ethics, and community relations.

 (B) The orientation shall be approved by the State Board of Education and conducted by public or private entities approved by the State Board of Education such as the South Carolina School Boards Association.

 (C) The provisions of this section also apply to members of county boards of education appointed or elected after July 1, 1997, in the same manner the provisions of this section apply to members of school district boards of trustees.

 (D) The provisions of this section do not apply to a school board trustee or county board of education member who was serving in such office on July 1, 1997, and who is continuously reelected or reappointed to office thereafter.

 (E) The State Department of Education shall reimburse a school district or county board of education conducting an orientation for a new board member as required by this section at the rate of eighty dollars for a member, provided that the total reimbursements by the department in one fiscal year must not exceed ten thousand dollars. If the total projected cost of these reimbursements for a year as determined by the department exceeds ten thousand dollars, the eighty-dollar reimbursement for each new member must be reduced proportionately. If funds are not available for these reimbursements, the board member orientation is not required but may be conducted at the option of a school district or county board of education. The State Board of Education shall establish guidelines and procedures for these reimbursements.

 (F) The State Department of Education must keep a record of the school board trustees who complete the orientation program.

HISTORY: 1997 Act No. 155, Part II, § 19A; 2002 Act No. 265, § 1.

**SECTION 59-19-50. Appointment and term of trustees for consolidated districts.**

 When school districts are consolidated, the county board of education shall appoint, from within the consolidated district, five trustees to serve as trustees of the new district, two for a term of one year, two for a term of two years and one for a term of three years. Thereafter the successors of all such trustees shall be elected for a term of three years or be appointed as provided by law.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-224.1; 1952 Code § 21-224.1; 1951 (47) 546.

**SECTION 59-19-60. Removal of trustees; vacancies.**

 Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, school district trustees who wilfully commit or engage in an act of malfeasance, misfeasance, chronic unexcused absenteeism, conflicts of interest, misconduct in office, or persistent neglect of duty in office, or are deemed medically incompetent or medically incapacitated, are subject to removal by the Governor upon any of the foregoing causes being made to appear to the satisfaction of the Governor. Before removing any such officer, the Governor shall inform him in writing of the specific charges brought against him and give him an opportunity on reasonable notice to be heard. Vacancies occurring in the membership of any board of trustees for any cause shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as provided for full-term appointments.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-225; 1952 Code § 21-225; 1942 Code § 5343; 1932 Code § 5369; Civ. C. '22 § 2615; Civ. C. '12 § 1752; Civ. C. '02 § 1210; 1903 (23) 64; 1904 (23) 528; 1906 (24) 31; 1914 (28) 480, 567; 1915 (29) 106; 1917 (30) 306; 1918 (30) 3; 1919 (31) 209, 212, 653; 1920 (31) 837; 1921 (32) 93; 1922 (32) 768, 784; 1926 (34) 1017; 1927 (35) 244, 259; 1928 (35) 1197; 1930 (36) 1307, 1518, 1960; 1933 (38) 493; 1937 (40) 235, 579; 1961 (52) 416; 2022 Act No. 138 (S.203), § 1, eff April 25, 2022.

**SECTION 59-19-70. Chairman and clerk of board.**

 The trustees shall, as soon as practicable after the appointment of any new trustee, organize by the election of one of their members as chairman and another as clerk of the board. The chairman shall preside at meetings of the board and perform other duties imposed on him under the law, and the clerk shall keep a record of the proceedings of all meetings in a book provided for that purpose and perform all other duties required of him by law.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-226; 1952 Code § 21-226; 1942 Code § 5343; 1932 Code § 5369; Civ. C. '22 § 2615; Civ. C. '12 § 1752; Civ. C. '02 § 1210; 1903 (23) 64; 1904 (23) 528; 1906 (24) 31; 1914 (28) 480, 567; 1915 (29) 106; 1917 (30) 306; 1918 (30) 3; 1919 (31) 209, 212, 653; 1920 (31) 837; 1921 (32) 93; 1922 (32) 768, 784; 1926 (34) 1017; 1927 (35) 244, 259; 1928 (35) 1197; 1930 (36) 1307, 1518, 1960; 1933 (38) 493; 1937 (40) 235, 579.

**SECTION 59-19-80. Requirements as to purchases and teacher employment.**

 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. No contract shall be entered into with teachers who are under a teaching contract in South Carolina before April fifteenth of each year. In lieu of making a particular purchase, the board may request the Purchasing and Property Division of the Department of Administration to make such purchase.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-228; 1952 Code § 21-228; 1942 Code § 5343; 1932 Code § 5369; Civ. C. '22 § 2615; Civ. C. '12 § 1752; Civ. C. '02 § 1210; 1903 (23) 64; 1904 (23) 528; 1906 (24) 31; 1914 (28) 480, 567; 1915 (29) 106; 1917 (30) 306; 1918 (30) 3; 1919 (31) 209, 212, 653; 1920 (31) 837; 1921 (32) 93; 1922 (32) 768, 784; 1926 (34) 1017; 1927 (35) 244, 259; 1928 (35) 1197; 1930 (36) 1307, 1518, 1960; 1933 (38) 493; 1937 (40) 235, 579; 1964 (53) 1883; 1965 (54) 274.

**SECTION 59-19-85. School board meetings; livestream access.**

 (A) Each public school governing body, including the governing bodies of charter schools and special schools, must make reasonable efforts to ensure the entirety of all meetings subject to the provisions of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act are open and accessible to the public and also available by means of live video and audio electronic access, hereafter referred to as livestream access, except during a lawful executive session.

 (B) If a governing body cannot provide such livestream access to the public despite making reasonable efforts to restore livestream access during the meeting, it must make a clear audio and video recording of the meeting in its entirety available on its website as soon as practicable and in no more than seven days after the meeting.

 (C) The State Board of Education shall adopt, and revise as necessary, a model livestream meeting policy suitable for governing bodies of public schools, including charter and special schools, to comply with provisions in this section. The policy must include, at a minimum:

 (1) resources, recommendations, and best practices facilitating requirements for all portions of livestreamed meetings to be visible and audible in real time and subsequently posted on applicable websites no more than two business days of the meeting;

 (2) suggested approaches for developing and implementing ability and expanding or improving existing livestream capacity;

 (3) publicizing availability of livestreamed meetings;

 (4) allowances for executive sessions;

 (5) penalties for policy violations or noncompliance not to exceed one percent of state funds to the district, charter school, or special school, with escalating tiers based on frequency, duration, and severity; and

 (6) the process for allowing a governing body with evidence of limited or no broadband access to request approval from the State Board of Education for up to an additional twelve months to comply with provisions in this section.

 (D)(1) Each public school governing body, including the governing bodies of charter schools and special schools, shall adopt a local policy applicable to its meetings within three months after adoption of the model policy by the State Board of Education. A local policy must include, at a minimum, the State Board of Education model policy.

 (2) If the State Board of Education adopts a revision to the model policy, then the public school governing body shall adopt and incorporate the revision into its local policy within three months after the adoption of the revision by the State Board of Education.

 (3) A public school governing body only may adopt or revise its local policy at a regularly scheduled meeting, which must be successfully livestreamed.

 (4) A public school governing body may not adopt or follow a livestream policy that prevents or impedes in-person participation by the public.

 (5) Within thirty days after adoption of a local policy or revision to the policy, a public school governing body shall submit a copy of the policy or revision to the State Superintendent of Education for State Board of Education approval.

 (E) Funding by the State will be provided to those school districts without streaming capabilities as of the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.

HISTORY: 2025 Act No. 28 (S.77), § 1, eff May 12, 2025.

**SECTION 59-19-90. General powers and duties of school trustees.**

 The board of trustees shall also:

 (1) Provide schoolhouses. Provide suitable schoolhouses in its district and make them comfortable, paying due regard to any schoolhouse already built or site procured, as well as to all other circumstances proper to be considered so as best to promote the educational interest of the districts;

 (2) Employ and discharge teachers. Employ teachers from those having certificates from the State Board of Education, fix their salaries and discharge them when good and sufficient reasons for so doing present themselves, subject to the supervision of the county board of education. In reaching a decision as to whether or not to employ any person qualified as a teacher, consideration may be given to the residence of such person but it shall not be the deciding factor or a bar to employing such person.

 (3) Promulgate rules and regulations. Promulgate rules prescribing scholastic standards of achievement and standards of conduct and behavior that must be met by all pupils as a condition to the right of such pupils to attend the public schools of such district. The rules shall take into account the necessity of proper conduct on the part of all pupils and the necessity for scholastic progress in order that the welfare of the greatest possible number of pupils shall be promoted notwithstanding that such rules may result in the ineligibility of pupils who fail to observe the required standards, and require the suspension or permanent dismissal of such pupils;

 (4) Call meetings of electors for consultation. Call meetings of the qualified electors of the district for consultation in regard to the school interests thereof, at which meetings the chairman or other member of the board shall preside, if present;

 (5) Control school property. Take care of, manage and control the school property of the district;

 (6) Visit schools. Visit the public schools within its district from time to time and at least once in every school term and take care that they are conducted according to law and with the utmost efficiency;

 (7) Control educational interest of district. Manage and control local educational interests of its district, with the exclusive authority to operate or not to operate any public school or schools;

 (8) Charge matriculation and incidental fees. Charge and collect matriculation and incidental fees from students; however, regulations or policies adopted by the board regarding charges and collections must take into account the students' ability to pay and must hold the fee to a minimum reasonable amount. Fees may not be charged to students eligible for free lunches and must be reduced pro rata for students eligible for reduced price lunches;

 (9) Transfer and assign pupils. Transfer any pupil from one school to another so as to promote the best interests of education, and determine the school within its district in which any pupil shall enroll; and

 (10) Prescribe conditions and charges for attendance. Be empowered to prescribe conditions and a schedule of charges based on cost per pupil as last determined, for attendance in the public schools of the school district for

 (a) children of parents temporarily residing within the school district;

 (b) children whose parents or legal guardians live elsewhere but who are residing with residents of the school district; and

 (c) children of parents residing on Federal property or military or naval bases of the United States located within or adjacent to the boundaries of such school district; and

 (d) all other children specially situated and not meeting the eligibility requirements of Section 59-63-30, but who shall have petitioned the trustees in writing seeking permission to attend the public schools of the school district.

 (11) Provide school-age child care program or facilities therefor. Provide:

 (a) a school-age child care program for children aged five through fourteen years that operates before or after the school day, or both, and during periods when school is not in session;

 (b) a school-age child care program that operates during periods when school is in session for students who are enrolled in a half-day kindergarten program; or

 (c) classrooms, other space, or both, in a school for use by an organization that is operating a school-age child care program before or after the school day, or both, and during periods when school is not in session for children aged five through fourteen years.

 All latchkey programs operating pursuant to this item must be licensed.

 (12) Establish the annual calendar. Have the authority to establish an annual school calendar for students, faculty, and staff to include starting dates, ending dates, holidays, make-up days, in-service days, and professional development days.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-230; 1952 Code § 21-230; 1942 Code § 5358; 1932 Code §§ 5384, 5596; Civ. C. '22 §§ 2616, 2630; Civ. C. '12 §§ 1753, 1761; Civ. C. '02 §§ 1211, 1218; Cr. C. '22 § 452; 1896 (21) 165; 1920 (31) 1046; 1923 (33) 180; 1937 (40) 75; 1955 (49) 83; 1964 (53) 2171; 1978 Act No. 504; 1989 Act No. 189, Part II, § 43 Sub 6; 1996 Act No. 458, Part II, § 72; 2003 Act No. 21, § 1, eff April 21, 2003; 2003 Act No. 89, § 3, eff July 23, 2003.

**SECTION 59-19-93. Adoption of procurement code by school district; suspension of distribution of funds for noncompliance.**

 Distributions of funds to a school district pursuant to the South Carolina Education Improvement Act of 1984 must be suspended after June 30, 1985, unless the school district has adopted and filed with the Division of General Services of the State Department of Administration a procurement code modeled on the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code or the model set forth in the Report of the Local Government Task Force on Procurement. All suspended funds must be released to the district at the time the district files an adopted procurement code and all subsequent distributions must be made as provided by law.

HISTORY: 1984 Act No. 512, Part II, § 9, Division V, § 6.

**SECTION 59-19-95. Implementation of student promotion policy.**

 The governing body of every school district of this State shall implement a student promotion policy which at least meets the minimum criteria established by the State Board of Education under Section 59-5-65 of the 1976 Code.

HISTORY: 1984 Act No. 512, Part II, § 9, Division II, Subdivision B, SubPart 2.

**SECTION 59-19-97. Evaluation system for continuing contract teachers.**

 The teacher's evaluation system for continuing contract teachers, mandated by Act 187 of 1979, must be fully implemented in all school districts by school year 1984-85. A formal evaluation of continuing contract teachers must take place not less than every three years. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the governing bodies of the school districts of this State from establishing higher standards for the evaluation of teachers.

HISTORY: 1984 Act No. 512, Part II, § 9, Division II, Subdivision C, SubPart 4, § 4.

**SECTION 59-19-100. Circumstances under which educational governing body of county shall have powers and duties of school trustees.**

 Where the county educational system operates as a unit, the county board of education or the educational governing body of the county shall have all the powers and duties of school trustees.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-230.1; 1955 (49) 83.

**SECTION 59-19-110. Rule-making power.**

 The boards of trustees of the several school districts may prescribe such rules and regulations not inconsistent with the statute law of this State as they may deem necessary or advisable to the proper disposition of matters brought before them. This rule-making power shall specifically include the right, at the discretion of the board, to designate one or more of its members to conduct any hearing in connection with any responsibility of the board and to make a report on this hearing to the board for its determination.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-230.2; 1956 (49) 1670.

**SECTION 59-19-117. District employee background checks.**

 (A) An individual hired by a local school district board of trustees to serve in any capacity in a public school in this State shall undergo a name-based South Carolina criminal record search conducted by the local school district using records maintained by the State Law Enforcement Division pursuant to regulations contained in subarticle 1, Article 3, Chapter 73 of the Code of Regulations. By August 1, 2010, a school district board of trustees shall adopt a written policy that specifies the required criminal record search as well as how the information received from the search impacts hiring decisions. The district policy must stipulate whether the district assumes the cost of the criminal record search or that the applicant assumes the cost. The policy must include, at a minimum, a prohibition of hiring individuals convicted of violent crimes as defined in Section 16-1-60 and hiring recommendations relative to felony convictions and relevant just-cause examples provided in Section 59-25-160. The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, working with the Department of Education, shall provide training to appropriate school district personnel regarding appropriate use of the information provided in criminal record searches.

 (B) Each school district of this State shall perform a National Sex Offender Registry check on all district employees hired to serve in any capacity in a public school and all volunteers who work in a school on an interim or regular basis as mentors, coaches, or any other capacity, or volunteers who serve as student chaperones or any other capacity having direct interaction with students. The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, working with the Department of Education, shall provide training to appropriate district personnel on the appropriate uses of the database. By August 1, 2010, the district board of trustees shall adopt a written policy that specifies the sex offender registry check as well as how information received from the search impacts hiring decisions. The policy must include, at a minimum, a prohibition of hiring individuals required to register as sex offenders pursuant to Section 23-3-430.

HISTORY: 2010 Act No. 168, § 1, eff May 11, 2010.

**SECTION 59-19-120. Rules and regulations governing use of school buildings.**

 Each district board of trustees may adopt rules and regulations which are not inconsistent with State law or the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education governing the use of school buildings for purposes other than normal school activity.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-230.3; 1974 (58) 1927.

**SECTION 59-19-125. Leasing school property for particular purposes.**

 Each district board of trustees may lease any school property for a rental which the board considers reasonable or permit the free use of school property for:

 (1) civic or public purposes; or

 (2) the operation of a school-age child care program for children aged five through fourteen years that operates before or after the school day, or both, and during periods when school is not in session, if the property is not needed for school purposes. Under this section the board may enter into a long-term lease with a corporation, community service organization, or other governmental entity, if the corporation, organization, or other governmental entity will use the property to be leased for civic or public purposes or for a school-age child care program. However, if the property subject to a long-term lease is being paid for from money in the district's debt service fund, then all proceeds from the long-term lease must be deposited in that school district's debt service fund so long as the property has not been paid for.

HISTORY: 1989 Act No. 189, Part II, § 43 Sub 7; 1992 Act No. 315, § 1.

**SECTION 59-19-130. Acquisition of supplies and equipment.**

 Each district board of trustees shall have the power to purchase, rent, lease, or otherwise acquire the supplies and equipment necessary for the operation of the public schools and other school facilities of the district.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-230.4; 1974 (58) 1927.

**SECTION 59-19-140. Rules and regulations governing use of equipment.**

 Each district board of trustees may adopt rules and regulations which are not inconsistent with State law or the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education governing the use of school equipment for purposes other than normal school activity.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-230.5; 1974 (58) 1927.

**SECTION 59-19-150. Maintenance of equipment.**

 Each district board of trustees shall keep its equipment in good repair.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-230.6; 1974 (58) 1927.

**SECTION 59-19-160. Gifts to school district; bond as prerequisite to receipt.**

 The trustees of any school district of this State may take and hold in trust for their particular school district any property granted, devised, given or bequeathed to such school district and apply the same in the interest of the schools of their district in such manner as in their judgment seems most conducive to the welfare of the schools when not otherwise directed by the terms of the grant, devise, gift or bequest. Before such trustees shall assume control of any grant, devise, gift or bequest, they shall give a bond, to be approved by the county board of education of the county in which such grant, devise, gift or bequest is made, conditioned for the faithful discharge of the trust reposed in them in respect to such property, which bond shall be deposited with the clerk of the court of the county.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-231; 1952 Code § 21-231; 1942 Code § 5392; 1932 Code § 5278; Civ. C. '22 § 2538; Civ. C. '12 § 1702; Civ. C. '02 § 1178; 1896 (21) 150; 1917 (30) 384; 1942 (42) 1444.

**SECTION 59-19-170. Acceptance and holding of property by trustees.**

 The district board of trustees of any school district may accept and hold in trust for its particular school district any property granted, devised, given or bequeathed to the district and use it in such manner as in its judgment seems most conducive to the welfare of the schools when not otherwise directed by the terms of the grant, devise, gift or bequest.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-231.1; 1974 (58) 1937.

**SECTION 59-19-180. Purchase of lands by trustees.**

 Whenever a board of school trustees deems it expedient to acquire lands for the erection thereon of any public schoolhouse or building or making any addition to or extension of any public schoolhouse or building already established or for public school playgrounds or other use for such public schools, it may purchase the lots or parcels of land necessary for such purposes and the fee simple title of such land shall be vested in such board of school trustees from the day of the sale.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-232; 1952 Code § 21-232; 1942 Code § 5360; 1932 Code § 5385; Civ. C. '22 § 4751; 1920 (31) 782; 1924 (33) 1130; 1930 (36) 1108.

**SECTION 59-19-190. Purchase of land by trustees; reassignment or disposal of land purchased with state funds.**

 Whenever a board of trustees deems it expedient to acquire lands for public school purposes with any State funds, it may purchase, subject to the prior written approval of the State Board of Education, the lots or parcels of land necessary for such purchase. The reassignment or disposal of such parcels of land purchased after 1952 with any State funds shall be subject to the prior written approval of the State Board of Education.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-232.1; 1973 (58) 635.

**SECTION 59-19-200. Condemnation of lands by trustees.**

 In case any owner of any lot or parcel of land refuses to sell it or demands what may be considered by the authorities an unreasonable price, the authorities may proceed to condemn the land pursuant to the Eminent Domain Procedure Act (Chapter 2 of Title 28).

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-233; 1952 Code § 21-233; 1942 Code § 5361; 1932 Code § 5386; 1930 (36) 1108; 1987 Act No. 173 § 51.

**SECTION 59-19-250. Sale or lease of school property by trustees.**

 The school trustees of the several school districts may sell or lease school property, real or personal, in their school district whenever they deem it expedient to do so and apply the proceeds of any such sale or lease to the school fund of the district. The consent of the county board of education or, in those counties which do not have a county board of education, the governing body of the county, shall be first obtained by the trustees desiring to make any such sale or lease. The board of trustees, within thirty days after making any such sale or lease, shall send a report thereof to the county board of education or, in those counties which do not have a county board of education, the governing body of the county, setting forth the terms and amount of the sale or lease.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-238; 1952 Code § 21-238; 1942 Code § 5345; 1932 Code § 5371; Civ. C. '22 § 2618; Civ. C. '12 § 1755; Civ. C. '02 § 1213; 1896 (21) 165; 1955 (49) 87; 1972 (57) 2126; 1973 (58) 397.

**SECTION 59-19-260. Trustees authorized to insure motor vehicles.**

 The board of trustees of any school district is hereby authorized to secure such insurance as it deems necessary relating to the operation of motor vehicles owned by the district.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-238.1; 1959 (51) 362.

**SECTION 59-19-270. Trustees may employ medical, technical, and clerical personnel.**

 Every district board of trustees may employ physicians, dentists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, other medical specialists, optometrists, nurses, dental hygienists, and other technical and clerical personnel as may be needed.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-238.2; 1973 (58) 267.

**SECTION 59-19-275. Use of armed personnel in public school districts.**

 Each public school district may use the services of personnel who are armed or delegated arrest authority to work on the premises of the district to promote safety and security on the premises, provided the district shall obtain proprietary security business licensure as provided in Section 40-18-60 and Section 40-18-80 and otherwise comply with the applicable requirements of those sections. The provisions of this section do not affect any requirement that a school district use the services of a school resource officer as provided by law. A school district, by obtaining proprietary security business licensure, may enhance school security and safety but shall not supplant the use of a school resource officer in a school, and security personnel hired under the authorization of this section shall not be used in the advisor and teacher roles authorized for school resource officers as provided in Section 5-7-12.

HISTORY: 2025 Act No. 36 (S.269), § 1, eff May 12, 2025.

**SECTION 59-19-280. Trustees may be members of School Boards Association.**

 Any member of the board of trustees of any school district in this State may become a member of the South Carolina School Boards Association, and the fees and dues necessary to acquire and maintain membership in this organization shall be paid by the school district.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-238.3; 1974 (58) 1926.

**SECTION 59-19-290. Contracts in excess of apportioned funds void.**

 All contracts which boards of trustees may make in excess of the funds apportioned to their districts shall be void.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-239; 1952 Code § 21-239; 1942 Code § 5374; 1932 Code § 5401; Civ. C. '22 § 2645; Civ. C. '12 § 1777; Civ. C. '02 § 1228; 1900 (21) 366; 1929 (36) 100.

**SECTION 59-19-300. Propriety of trustee's receiving pay as teacher.**

 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.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-240; 1952 Code § 21-240; 1942 Code § 5357; 1932 Code § 5383; Civ. C. '22 § 2629; Civ. C. '12 § 1760; Civ. C. '02 § 1217; 1896 (21) 165; 1973 (58) 214; 1977 Act No. 66, § 1.

**SECTION 59-19-310. Exercising office of trustee after termination of office.**

 If a trustee of any school district shall attempt to act or discharge the duties of such office after he has been removed or after his successor shall have qualified, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, after conviction, be punished by a fine of not less than one hundred and one dollars or by imprisonment for not less than thirty days, or both, at the discretion of the court.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-241; 1952 Code § 21-241; 1942 Code § 1568; 1932 Code § 1568; Cr. C. '22 § 516; Cr. C. '12 § 585; Cr. C. '02 § 428; G.S. 1024; R.S. 341; 1878 (16) 584.

**SECTION 59-19-315. Commencement of trustee's term of office.**

 The term of office of every elected trustee of a school district must commence one week following the certification of his election.

HISTORY: 1985 Act No. 65, § 1.

**SECTION 59-19-320. Trustees may cross bridge or ferry free of charge.**

 The school trustees shall be allowed to cross all bridges or ferries free of charge when they are traveling on official business.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-242; 1952 Code § 21-242; 1942 Code § 5358; 1932 Code §§ 5384, 5596; Civ. C. '22 §§ 2616, 2630; Civ. C. '12 §§ 1753, 1761; Civ. C. '02 §§ 1211, 1218; Cr. C. '22 § 452; 1896 (21) 165; 1920 (31) 1046; 1923 (33) 180; 1937 (40) 75.

**SECTION 59-19-330. Annual report of trustees of certain special and graded school districts.**

 The trustees of special and graded school districts created by acts of the General Assembly shall make annual reports to the State Superintendent of Education in such form and at such time as he shall prescribe.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-243; 1952 Code § 21-243; 1942 Code § 5391; 1932 Code § 5419; Civ. C. '22 § 2682; Civ. C. '12 § 1792; Civ. C. '02 § 1238; 1896 (22) 150; 1897 (22) 514.

**SECTION 59-19-340. Child development programs for three and four-year-old children.**

 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 first of the applicable school year in child development programs. The board of trustees of school districts having programs serving three and four-year-olds on the date of enactment of this section may continue to serve three-year-old children.

HISTORY: 1984 Act No. 512, Part II, § 9, Division II, Subdivision A, SubPart 3, § 2(E); 1993 Act No. 135, § 8; 1993 Act No. 164, Part II, § 29A.

**SECTION 59-19-350. Schools of innovation exempt from applicable state statutes and regulations.**

 (A)(1) A local school district board of trustees of this State desirous of creating an avenue for new, innovative, and more flexible ways of educating children within their district, may create one or more schools of innovation within the district that are exempt from applicable state statutes and regulations which govern other schools in the district. To achieve the status of a school of innovation and have exemption from specific statutes and regulations, the local board of trustees, at a public meeting, shall identify specific statutes and regulations which will be considered for exemption and shall disclose the financial model to be used. The exemption may be granted by the governing board of the district only if there is a two-thirds affirmative vote of the board for each exemption and the proposed exemption is approved by the State Board of Education, provided a district may not designate all schools in the district as schools of innovation.

 (2) To achieve the status of exemption:

 (a) A school district must identify each state statute, regulation, and local district policy from which the school is requesting exemption and specify how this flexibility will support academic achievement for students and the Profile of the Graduate. No district is permitted to request flexibility from all state regulations and statutes for any school or schools.

 (b) The district superintendent must submit a request containing the information in subitem (a) to the local board of trustees for approval, which must be considered in a public meeting and requires a two-thirds vote of the board for approval. Any change in the request must be approved by the local board by a two-thirds vote.

 (c) Once approved by a local school board, the district superintendent must submit the request to the State Board of Education for approval, which requires a two-thirds vote of the State Board. Any change in a request that is pending approval by, or has been approved by, the State Board of Education must be made in the same manner as provided in subitem (b) and this subitem for initial requests.

 (3) Each school of innovation annually before July first shall:

 (a) demonstrate compliance with the financial model identified in item (1);

 (b) provide full financial statements detailing how it receives and expends funds; and

 (c) report the academic achievement of its students as indicated by the performance of its students on the same assessments and matrices required of all other public schools, based on grade level.

 (4) Nothing in this section permits a local school district board of trustees to relinquish control or oversight of the schools created pursuant to this section, and the local school district board must ensure transparent and timely reporting of fiscal and academic performance for each school of innovation.

 (B) In seeking exemptions, the local board of trustees may not exempt:

 (1) federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services;

 (2) health, safety, civil rights, and disability rights requirements as are applied to other public schools operating in the district;

 (3) minimum student attendance requirements;

 (4) state assessment requirements; and

 (5) certification requirements for teachers in the core academic areas as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, Public Law 107-110; however, up to twenty-five percent of the teaching staff of the school may be employed if the individual possesses a baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject he is hired to teach.

 (C) Any school created pursuant to this section shall admit all children eligible to attend the school subject to space limitations and may not limit or deny admission or show preference in admission decisions to any individual or group of individuals.

 (D) A local school district that provides exemptions pursuant to subsection (A) shall provide the State Department of Education with documentation of the approved exemptions and shall submit evaluation documentation to be reviewed by the State Board of Education after three years of the exemption to ensure that the district continues to meet the needs of its students. Upon review, if the State Board of Education determines the continuation of the exemption does not meet the needs of the students attending the district school of choice, the board may suspend exemptions granted by the local board of trustees with a two-thirds vote. Before suspending the exemptions, the State Board of Education shall notify the district and provide the district with any opportunity to defend the continuation of approved exemptions.

HISTORY: 2012 Act No. 164, § 17, eff May 14, 2012; 2021 Act No. 20 (H.3589), § 1, eff April 22, 2021.

**SECTION 59-19-360. Competency-based education systems.**

 (A)(1) If a district or school is seeking to implement competency-based education, the State Board of Education may exempt the school from state laws, policies, and regulations that hinder the implementation of certain competency-based practices. A district that wishes to obtain an exemption may submit a waiver application to the State Board of Education in a format developed by the State Department of Education. To be considered, a waiver application must:

 (a) be approved by the local school district board of trustees;

 (b) be aligned to the district strategic plan; and

 (c) provide for the implementation of the strategies described in the waiver application for all students in the school, which may be implemented in phases over a period of five or fewer years.

 (2) A district must show evidence of the meaningful steps already taken to engage parents and community stakeholders. A district also must include a continued plan to seek parental outreach and consultation using guidelines approved by the State Board of Education when submitting a waiver application for approval by its local board of trustees and the State Board of Education, or the application may not be considered.

 (3) A district whose waiver application is approved may request additional exemptions and may request amendments to its current approved waiver on a rolling basis.

 (B) Competency-based education is designed to improve educational outcomes for students by advancing their mastery of concepts and skills. A competency-based system in South Carolina must align with the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate and include the following core principles:

 (1) Learning outcomes must emphasize competencies that include:

 (a) application and creation of World Class Knowledge; and

 (b) the development and application of the World Class Skills and Life and Career Characteristics identified in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

 (2) Competencies with explicit, measurable, and transferable student learning objectives provide transparency and guide students, with customized support from teachers, as the students pursue their own inquiries, understanding, and ownership of learning.

 (3) A student shall master competencies along a personalized and flexible pathway before he may advance. A student may demonstrate his mastery of competencies through his performance of the competencies, application of the competencies, or both.

 (4) Assessments must be meaningful and used to personalize learning experiences with a student.

 (5) A student must receive timely and personalized support based on his individual learning needs.

 (C) A local school board of trustees and the State Board of Education may not exempt a school from:

 (1) federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services;

 (2) health, safety, civil rights, and disability rights requirements as applied to other public schools operating in the district; or

 (3) state and federal assessment requirements.

 (D) A school operating under a waiver pursuant to this section shall admit all children eligible to attend the school, subject to space limitations, and may not limit or deny admission or show preference in an admission decision to an individual or group of individuals.

 (E) If a school is operating under a waiver pursuant to this section, each student enrolled in the school is still considered to be a full-time equivalent student enrolled in the school for the purpose of calculating state financial support, average daily membership, and attendance, and for accountability purposes, the department may develop a process to ensure that schools and districts are not penalized for the purposes of accreditation.

 (F) If a school is operating under a waiver pursuant to this section, each student must remain enrolled in the state's student information system.

 (G) The State Department of Education shall establish procedures to ensure that a student who attends a school that is operating under a waiver pursuant to this section and subsequently transfers to another school within the district or to another district is not penalized by being required to repeat coursework that he successfully has mastered. The department may provide a necessary accreditation exemption to a school that launches a competency-based education program.

 (H)(1) The State Department of Education shall create evaluation criteria and guidelines for schools that are operating under a waiver pursuant to this section. A participating school shall submit required data for a biennial cyclical review on a form developed by the department. The review must begin at the conclusion of the second academic year of the school's implementation of the waiver. The required data shall include, but not be limited to, indicators of student engagement, instructional practices, performance on assessments (formative, benchmark, and state), high school success, and postsecondary success. The review must begin at the conclusion of the second academic year of the school's implementation of the waiver. A report summarizing the reviews including the waivers requested and how they hindered implementation shall be distributed to the Governor and the Legislature.

 (2) If upon the cyclical review the department determines that a goal or objective is not being met, the department shall notify the district and school in writing. The district and school have sixty days to respond, after which the department may recommend revocation of the flexibility provisions to the State Board of Education.

 (I) The Commission on Higher Education and State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education shall establish policies to provide fair and equitable access to institutions of higher education and technical colleges as well as scholarships and financial aid for graduates of schools implementing innovative school models and using nontraditional diplomas and transcripts.

 (J) The State Department of Education shall establish a definition for competency-based education that must be published on the website of each school district that implements this system of education.

HISTORY: 2024 Act No. 127 (H.3295), § 3, eff May 13, 2024.

Article 3

Appeal From Action of Trustees

**SECTION 59-19-510. Right to appeal to county board of education; petition.**

 Subject to the provisions of Section 59-19-90, any parent or person standing in loco parentis to any child of school age, the representative of any school or any person aggrieved by any decision of the board of trustees of any school district in any matter of local controversy in reference to the construction or administration of the school laws or the placement of any pupil in any school within the district, shall have the right to appeal the matter in controversy to the county board of education by serving a written petition upon the chairman of the board of trustees, the chairman of the county board of education and the adverse party within ten days from the date upon which a copy of the order or directive of the board of trustees was delivered to him by mail or otherwise. The petition shall be verified and shall include a statement of the facts and issues involved in the matter in controversy.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-247; 1952 Code § 21-103; 1942 Code § 5317; 1932 Code § 5348; Civ. C. '22 § 2597; Civ. C. '12 § 1736; Civ. C. '02 § 1203; 1896 (22) 161; 1956 (49) 1655.

**SECTION 59-19-520. Appeal in counties where functions of trustees and board of education have been combined.**

 In counties where the functions of the boards of trustees and those of the county board of education have been combined, the appeal provided in Section 59-19-510 shall lie to the county board of education from its original action disposing of the matter in controversy before hearing.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-247.1; 1952 Code § 21-103; 1942 Code § 5317; 1932 Code § 5348; Civ. C. '22 § 2597; Civ. C. '12 § 1736; Civ. C. '02 § 1203; 1896 (22) 161; 1956 (49) 1655.

**SECTION 59-19-530. Hearing; separate hearing for each child in controversies involving children of school age.**

 The parties shall be entitled to a prompt and fair hearing by the county board of education, which shall try the matter de novo and in accordance with its rules and regulations. Where individual children of school age are involved in the matter in controversy, the case of each child shall be heard and disposed of separately.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-247.2; 1952 Code § 21-103; 1942 Code § 5317; 1932 Code § 5348; Civ. C. '22 § 2597; Civ. C. '12 § 1736; Civ. C. '02 § 1203; 1896 (22) 161; 1956 (49) 1655.

**SECTION 59-19-540. Hearing; appearance of parties and evidence.**

 At any hearing provided for in Section 59-19-530, the parties may appear in person or through an attorney licensed to practice in South Carolina and may submit such testimony, under oath, or other evidence as may be pertinent to the matter in controversy.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-247.3; 1952 Code § 21-103; 1942 Code § 5317; 1932 Code § 5348; Civ. C. '22 § 2597; Civ. C. '12 § 1736; Civ. C. '02 § 1203; 1896 (22) 161; 1956 (49) 1655.

**SECTION 59-19-550. Order of board of education; service on parties.**

 After the parties have been heard, the county board of education shall issue a written order disposing of the matter in controversy, a copy of which shall be mailed to each of the parties at interest.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-247.4; 1952 Code § 21-103; 1942 Code § 5317; 1932 Code § 5348; Civ. C. '22 § 2597; Civ. C. '12 § 1736; Civ. C. '02 § 1203; 1896 (22) 161; 1956 (49) 1655.

**SECTION 59-19-560. Appeal to court of common pleas.**

 Any party aggrieved by the order of the county board of education shall have the right to appeal to the court of common pleas of the county by serving a written verified petition upon the chairman of the county board of education and upon the adverse party within ten days from the date upon which copy of the order of the county board of education was mailed to the petitioner. The parties so served shall have twenty days from the date of service, exclusive of the date of service, within which to make return to the petition or to otherwise plead, and the matter in controversy shall be tried by the circuit judge, de novo, with or without reference to a master or special referee.

 The county board of education shall certify to the court the record of the proceedings upon which its order was based, and the record so certified shall be admitted as evidence and considered by the court, along with such additional evidence as the parties may desire to present. The court shall consider and dispose of the cause as other equity cases are tried and disposed of, and all parties at interest shall have such rights and remedies, including the right of appeal, as are now provided by law in such cases.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-247.5; 1952 Code § 21-103; 1942 Code § 5317; 1932 Code § 5348; Civ. C. '22 § 2597; Civ. C. '12 § 1736; Civ. C. '02 § 1203; 1896 (22) 161; 1956 (49) 1655.

**SECTION 59-19-570. Appeal shall not act as supersedeas.**

 Until the matter in controversy has been finally disposed of, no appeal shall act as a supersedeas or suspension of the order of the board having original jurisdiction of the cause.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-247.6; 1952 Code § 21-103; 1942 Code § 5317; 1932 Code § 5348; Civ. C. '22 § 2597; Civ. C. '12 § 1736; Civ. C. '02 § 1203; 1896 (22) 161; 1956 (49) 1655.

**SECTION 59-19-580. Appeal from decision to operate or not to operate school.**

 Any provision of this article to the contrary notwithstanding, the decision of any board of trustees of any school district to operate or not to operate a school or schools shall not be subject to the appellate procedures specified in this article. Any such decision may be appealed directly to the court of common pleas of the county in which any school to be operated or not to be operated is located; provided, however, that questions considered by the court upon such appeal shall be limited to questions of law.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-247.7; 1962 (52) 2145.