CHAPTER 25

Teachers

Article 1

General Provisions

**SECTION 59-25-10. Employment of teachers related to board members or serving as board members.**

 No person who is a member of the board of trustees or a member of the immediate family of a member of the board of trustees of any school district shall be employed by the board as a teacher without the written approval of the board of trustees of the district and, when applicable, of the board of education of the county, or unless a majority of the parents or guardians of the children attending the school for which such teacher is employed requests such employment in writing. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any teacher who was employed prior to the time he or his family member became a board member. For purposes of this section, the immediate family of a member of the board of trustees shall include only his parents, children, brothers or sisters. Provided, that the provisions of this section shall not apply to school bus drivers.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-351; 1952 Code § 21-351; 1942 Code § 5374; 1932 Code § 5401; Civ. C. '22 § 2645; Civ. C. '12 § 1777; Civ. C. '02 § 1228; 1900 (23) 366; 1929 (36) 100; 1961 (52) 183; 1976 Act No. 652, § 1.

**SECTION 59-25-20. Qualifications of teachers.**

 No board of school trustees shall hereafter employ any teacher who has not a certificate to teach in the free public schools of the State. This provision, however, shall not affect the employment of any teacher now teaching in any of the schools of the special school districts. The trustees of any such school may also impose any additional examinations and qualifications they may deem proper before or after employing any teacher.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-354; 1952 Code § 21-354; 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 (22) 165; 1920 (31) 1046; 1923 (33) 180; 1937 (40) 75.

**SECTION 59-25-30. Officials not permitted to designate place for teacher to board or live.**

 It shall be unlawful for any trustee of any public school or any superintendent or other official thereof to require any teacher to board or live at any teacherage or specified place. Each individual teacher shall have the right to choose his or her boarding place, and for so doing his right to teach shall not be voided by the trustees of any school board or superintendent or other official. Any school trustee or superintendent who shall violate the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not less than twenty-five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars or be imprisoned for not less than ten days nor more than thirty days, in the discretion of the court.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-356; 1952 Code § 21-356; 1942 Code § 5383; 1936 (39) 1693.

**SECTION 59-25-40. Effective date of pay increase resulting from examination.**

 In the event that a teacher takes the teacher's examination and becomes entitled to a pay increase as a result thereof such increase shall become effective and payable commencing with the semester following the date of examination.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-360; 1967 (55) 669.

**SECTION 59-25-45. Health and dental insurance.**

 Teachers working less than thirty hours a week, but no less than fifteen hours a week, shall qualify for state health and dental insurance. The Public Employee Benefit Authority is directed to amend its "Plan of Benefits" regarding fringe benefits to conform to the provisions of this section. Teachers and employers shall each contribute toward the cost of these benefits with the employer paying only that portion of the employer's normal cost which is attributable to the time the teacher is working, and the teacher shall pay all remaining costs. However, the employer's contribution shall be no less than half the normal cost.

HISTORY: 2000 Act No. 393, § 9.

**SECTION 59-25-47. Unused leave payments authorized.**

 (A) A local school district board of trustees or, in the case of a charter school, the governing body of a charter school, is authorized to adopt a policy consistent with the school district or, in the case of a charter school, the school budget, providing that all certified and noncertified public school teachers identified in the Professional Certified Staff listing, certified special school classroom teachers, certified school librarians, certified school counselors, and career specialists who are employed by a school district or a charter school who earn, but do not use sick and annual leave in excess of ninety days, may be eligible to receive payment at the end of each fiscal year for these earned days in excess of ninety days for each excess day at a district's or charter school's established rate of substitute pay for their individual job classification, or another amount, subject to approval by the local school board, or, in the case of a charter school, the governing body of the charter school. This provision applies only to sick leave and annual leave in excess of ninety days that is accrued after July 1, 2018.

 (B) A local school district board of trustees or, in the case of a charter school, the governing body of a charter school, must adopt a policy enabling all district or charter school employees to contribute any unused sick or annual leave in excess of sixty days to a sick leave bank that is made available to all district or charter school employees. Such policy must include criteria for employee eligibility to apply for use of the sick leave bank, procedures for review of applications for use of the sick leave bank, and criteria for the maximum number of days an employee may access from the sick leave bank during a single fiscal year.

 (C) Notwithstanding any provision contained in this section, this section does not and may not be construed to amend or to repeal:

 (1) the rights of a school district, charter school, or legislative delegation to set or restrict any existing teacher incentive payment programs; or

 (2) any existing teacher incentive payment programs provided by current law or any existing limitation on the fiscal autonomy of a school district or charter school that is more restrictive than any incentives provided in subsection (A).

 (D) A local district, prior to the effective date of this act, who has implemented a leave bank policy or a policy that advances the full annual leave balance to a new employee with the first payroll disbursement shall be exempt from the requirements of this section.

HISTORY: 2018 Act No. 198 (S.888), § 1, eff May 15, 2018; 2025 Act No. 12 (H.3196), § 3, eff July 1, 2025.

**SECTION 59-25-50. Salary adjustments for certified instructional personnel of state agency.**

 Each state agency having certified instructional personnel shall receive an allocation based on the following formula: Each state agency shall receive such funds as are required to adjust the pay of all certified instructional personnel to the appropriate salary provided by the salary schedules of the surrounding school districts utilized for the 1984-85 school year and subsequent years.

HISTORY: 1984 Act No. 512, Part II, § 9, Division II, Subdivision C, SubPart 2, § 4.

**SECTION 59-25-55. Expansion of number of high achieving minority students entering teaching.**

 The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of South Carolina (CERRA-South Carolina) in cooperation with the Commission on Higher Education shall establish a program with the purpose of expanding the number of high achieving minority students entering teacher education programs. The program shall include, but not be limited to, identification of minority high school students who have an interest in teaching and recruitment of those students into the teacher cadet program, personal counseling of minority students in the teacher cadet program about high demand certification areas, and college opportunities.

HISTORY: 1989 Act No. 194, § 21; 2003 Act No. 14, § 1, eff upon approval (became law without the Governor's signature on April 23, 2003).

**SECTION 59-25-57. Salaries negotiable below schedule for non-TERI retired teachers; expiration.**

 Notwithstanding another provision of law, school districts uniformly may negotiate salaries below the school district salary schedule for the 2014-2015 school year for retired teachers who are not participants in the Teacher and Employee Retention Incentive program. Thereafter, school districts annually may continue to uniformly negotiate salaries below the school district salary schedule for retired teachers who are not participants in the Teacher and Employee Retention Incentive program for each upcoming school year through the 2019-2020 school year. The provisions of this section expire on July 1, 2020.

HISTORY: 2014 Act No. 238 (S.1219), § 1, eff June 2, 2014.

**SECTION 59-25-60. Non-teaching occupational experience credit.**

 (A) When reviewing an application by an individual for an educator certificate, the State Department of Education shall award years of experience on the educator certificate for non-teaching occupational experience in, or related to, the content field of the certificate for which the individual qualifies. One year of experience credit may be awarded for every two years of full-time relevant occupational experience completed by the individual. Years of experience shall be awarded solely for the purpose of advancement on the teacher salary schedule. Except for individuals seeking work-based certification, educator experience credit and relevant occupational experience eligible for educator experience credit must have been earned after the conferral of a bachelor's degree from a college or university meeting State Board of Education accreditation requirements. To be eligible for years of experience on the educator certificate, the individual must complete and submit a verification of relevant occupational experience form developed by the State Department of Education with the application for an educator certificate.

 (B) Individuals who entered the teaching profession prior to July 1, 2025, with non-teaching occupational experience in, or related to, the content field of their teaching certificate may complete and submit the verification of relevant occupational experience form to the State Department of Education to have additional years of experience added to their certificate for the purposes of advancing on the teacher salary schedule. If additional years of experience are awarded, the eligible individual is entitled to have his pay adjusted at the beginning of the next school year, from the effective date of the adjustment, to reflect the new experience step on the employing district's salary schedule. However, the individual is not entitled to retroactive pay for the increased years of experience during prior years of teaching or for any purpose other than advancement on the teacher salary schedule.

 (C) Nothing in this section alters any existing requirements for receiving an educator certificate. Individuals with the occupational experience identified in subsection (A) must still meet all other existing requirements in order to receive an educator certificate.

 (D) Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as allowing additional years of experience to be awarded for purposes other than advancement on the teacher salary schedule. Years of experience awarded pursuant to this section for relevant occupational experience are not considered service credit for the purposes of the state retirement or state health plans administered by PEBA.

HISTORY: 2025 Act No. 29 (S.78), § 1, eff May 12, 2025.

Article 3

Examinations and Teachers' Certificates

**SECTION 59-25-110. System for examination and certification of teachers.**

 The State Board of Education, by rules and regulations, shall formulate and administer a system for the examination and certification of teachers.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-371; 1952 Code § 21-371; 1942 Code § 5380; 1932 Code § 5292; Civ. C. '22 § 2550; Civ. C. '12 § 1730; Civ. C. '02 § 1200; 1897 (22) 516; 1903 (24) 1084; 1906 (25) 37; 1908 (25) 1151; 1909 (26) 73; 1910 (26) 740; 1911 (27) 116; 1912 (27) 575; 1913 (28) 21; 1914 (28) 500; 1917 (30) 390; 1920 (31) 965; 1974 (58) 1928.

**SECTION 59-25-115. Notice to enrollee in teacher education program regarding effect of prior criminal record; criminal records check and fingergprinting requirements.**

 (A) A person enrolled in a teacher education program in South Carolina must be advised by the college or university that his prior criminal record could prevent certification as a teacher in this State in accordance with State Board of Education guidelines.

 (B) Before beginning full-time clinical teaching experience in this State, a teacher education candidate shall undergo a state criminal records check by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division and a national criminal records check supported by fingerprints by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The cost associated with the FBI background checks are those of the applicant. Information reported relative to prior arrests or convictions will be reviewed by the State Department of Education, and the State Board of Education when warranted, according to board guidelines. A teacher education candidate with prior arrests or convictions of a serious nature that could affect his fitness to teach in the public schools of South Carolina may be denied the opportunity to complete the clinical teaching experience and qualify for initial teacher certification. An individual who is denied this opportunity as a result of prior arrests or convictions, after one year, may request reconsideration under guidelines established by the State Board of Education.

 (C) A graduate of a teacher education program applying for initial teacher certification must have completed the FBI fingerprint process within eighteen months of formally applying for initial teacher certification or the fingerprint process must be repeated.

HISTORY: 1990 Act No. 387, § 1; 2004 Act No. 195, § 1, eff January 1, 2005.

**SECTION 59-25-120. Examination on United States Constitution and loyalty.**

 All persons applying for certificates authorizing them to become teachers in the public schools of this State shall, in addition to other requirements and before receiving such certificate, be required to pass a satisfactory examination upon the provisions and principles of the Constitution of the United States and shall also satisfy the examining power of their loyalty thereto.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-372; 1952 Code § 21-372; 1942 Code § 5324; 1932 Code § 5342; 1924 (33) 1186.

**SECTION 59-25-130. Record of teachers' certificates.**

 A full record of all teachers' certificates shall be kept in the State Department of Education showing the name, age, sex, color and date of certificate of each person and such other information as may be desired.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-373; 1952 Code § 21-373; 1942 Code § 5381; 1932 Code § 5295; Civ. C. '22 § 2553; 1920 (31) 965; 1933 (38) 323.

**SECTION 59-25-140. Fee for duplicate certificate; use of resulting fund.**

 The board of examiners for teachers may charge a fee of fifty cents for every duplicate certificate. The proceeds from such fees shall be deposited with the State Treasurer to be used by the board of examiners to cover the expense and labor of issuing duplicate certificates promptly and to pay the traveling expenses of the director of the board of examiners while in the discharge of his official duties. All disbursements of such fees shall be made only on vouchers approved by the State Superintendent of Education. An itemized statement of such expenditures shall be kept and published in the annual report of the State Superintendent of Education.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-374; 1952 Code § 21-374; 1942 Code § 5381; 1932 Code § 5295; Civ. C. '22 § 2553; 1920 (31) 965; 1933 (38) 323.

**SECTION 59-25-150. Revocation or suspension of certificate.**

 The State Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375; 1974 (58) 1928.

**SECTION 59-25-160. Revocation or suspension of certificate; "just cause" defined.**

 Section 59-25-160. "Just cause" may consist of any one or more of the following:

 (1) incompetence;

 (2) wilful neglect of duty;

 (3) wilful violation of the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education;

 (4) unprofessional conduct;

 (5) drunkenness;

 (6) cruelty;

 (7) crime against the law of this State or the United States;

 (8) immorality;

 (9) any conduct involving moral turpitude;

 (10) dishonesty;

 (11) evident unfitness for position for which employed;

 (12) sale or possession of narcotics; or

 (13) breach of contract.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.1; 1974 (58) 1928; 2025 Act No. 12 (H.3196), § 6, eff July 1, 2025.

**SECTION 59-25-170. Revocation or suspension of certificate; notice to teacher and opportunity for hearing.**

 No person's certificate may be either revoked or suspended unless written notice specifying the cause for either the revocation or suspension has been given to the person by the State Board of Education and a hearing has been afforded such person.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.2; 1974 (58) 1928.

**SECTION 59-25-180. Revocation or suspension of certificate; notice to district board of trustees.**

 Whenever the State Board of Education either revokes or suspends a certificate of any person it shall immediately notify the chairman of the district board of trustees that employs such person of the revocation or suspension.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.3; 1974 (58) 1928.

**SECTION 59-25-190. Revocation or suspension of certificate; effect; payment of salary.**

 The revocation or suspension of the certificate of any person shall terminate the employment of such person until such time as a decision is reached concerning the charge against such person; however, such person shall be paid until the final disposition of the case by the State Board of Education.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.4; 1974 (58) 1928.

**SECTION 59-25-200. Revocation or suspension of certificate; request for hearing; conduct of hearing; determination by board.**

 Within fifteen days after receipt of notice of revocation or suspension, such person may serve upon the chairman of the State Board of Education or the State Superintendent of Education a written request for either a public or private hearing before the board. The hearing shall be held by the board not less than ten days nor more than twenty days after the request is served, and a notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given the person not less than four days prior to the date of the hearing. At the hearing, which shall be as summary and as simple as reasonably may be, the parties may appear in person and by counsel, if desired, and may present any testimony, under oath, or other evidence as may be pertinent. Within fifteen days following the hearing, the board shall determine whether there existed just cause for the notice of revocation or suspension and shall render its written order accordingly either affirming, withdrawing, or modifying the notice of revocation or suspension.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.5; 1974 (58) 1928.

**SECTION 59-25-210. Revocation or suspension of certificate; power of board to issue subpoenas, administer oaths, and examine witnesses.**

 The State Board of Education, for the purposes of this article, shall have the power to subpoena witnesses, to administer oaths, and to examine witnesses and such parts of any books and records as relate to the issue or issues involved.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.6; 1974 (58) 1928.

**SECTION 59-25-220. Revocation or suspension of certificate; depositions.**

 Any party to such proceedings may cause to be taken the deposition of witnesses within or without the State and either by commission or de bene esse. Such depositions shall be taken in accordance with and subject to the same provisions, conditions, and restrictions as apply to the taking of like depositions in civil actions at law in the court of common pleas, and the same rules with respect to the giving of notice to the opposite party, the taking and transcribing of testimony, the transmission and certification thereof and matters of practice relating thereto shall apply.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.7; 1974 (58) 1928.

**SECTION 59-25-230. Revocation or suspension of certificate; service of notices.**

 Notices to be given by a party shall be served upon the opposite party prior to the filing thereof. All notices shall be served in person or by registered mail.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.8; 1974 (58) 1928.

**SECTION 59-25-240. Revocation or suspension of certificate; service of subpoenas; witness fees.**

 The county sheriffs and their respective deputies shall serve all subpoenas of the State Board of Education and shall receive the same fees as are now provided by law for like service. Each witness who appears in obedience to such subpoena shall receive for attendance the fees and mileage of witnesses in civil cases in the courts of the county in which the hearing is held.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.9; 1974 (58) 1928.

**SECTION 59-25-250. Revocation or suspension of certificate; powers and duties of court of common pleas; warrant for production of witnesses.**

 (A) Upon application by the State Board of Education, the court of common pleas shall enforce by proper proceedings the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books, papers, and records. The unexcused failure or refusal to attend and give testimony or produce books, papers, and records as may have been required in any subpoena issued by the State Board of Education is a misdemeanor. A person who engages in this conduct, upon conviction, must be fined in the discretion of the court or imprisoned not more than three years, or both.

 (B) The State Board of Education may issue to the sheriff of the county in which a hearing is held a warrant requiring him to produce at the hearing a witness who has ignored or failed to comply with any subpoena issued by the State Board of Education and properly served upon the witness. The warrant authorizes the sheriff to arrest and produce at the hearing the witness, and it is his duty to do so. The failure of a witness to appear in response to a subpoena may be excused on the same grounds as provided by law for the attendance of witnesses in the courts of this State.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.10; 1974 (58) 1928; 1993 Act No. 184, § 255.

**SECTION 59-25-260. Revocation or suspension of certificate; appeals.**

 The findings of fact by the State Board of Education are final and conclusive. A person aggrieved by the order of the State Board of Education, within thirty days, may appeal to the Administrative Law Court as provided in Sections 1-23-380(B) and 1-23-600(D), to review errors of law only, by filing with the Administrative Law Court and the State Board of Education notice of appeal. The State Board of Education shall file a certified copy of the record with the Administrative Law Court in accordance with its rules of procedure. An appeal from the order of the Administrative Law Court must be taken in the manner provided by the South Carolina Appellate Court Rules.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.11; 1974 (58) 1928; 1999 Act No. 55, § 52; 2006 Act No. 387, § 43, eff July 1, 2006.

**SECTION 59-25-270. Revocation or suspension of certificate; reinstatements.**

 If either the State Board of Education, the court of common pleas, the court of appeals, or the Supreme Court of South Carolina reverses the order of revocation or suspension, the person whose certificate had been either revoked or suspended by the state board shall be fully reinstated and shall receive all salary lost as a result of such revocation or suspension of his certificate; provided, however, that where the State Board of Education, within the time prescribed by law, appeals from an order of the court of common pleas reversing an order of revocation or suspension rendered by the State Board of Education, the person whose certificate had either been revoked or suspended by the state board shall not be entitled to be reinstated and to receive all salary lost as a result of his certificate's revocation or suspension by the state board unless and until the Supreme Court or court of appeals affirms the order of the court of common pleas.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-375.13; 1974 (58) 1928; 1999 Act No. 55, § 53.

**SECTION 59-25-280. Crimes warranting revocation; refusals to issue or nonrenewals of certificates.**

 (A) The State Board of Education permanently shall revoke, refuse to issue, or renew a certificate without a hearing, if the holder of or applicant for the certificate pleads guilty, pleads nolo contendere, or is found guilty of the following crimes, whether or not a sentence is imposed and regardless of where the matter was tried:

 (1) a violent crime as defined in Section 16-1-60;

 (2) certain offenses related to obscenity, material harmful to minors, child exploitation, and child prostitution, including Sections 16-15-305, 16-15-335, 16-15-345, 16-15-355, 16-15-365, 16-15-385, 16-15-387, 16-15-395, 16-15-405, 16-15-410, 16-15-415, and 16-15-425; or

 (3) a criminal offense similar in nature to the crimes listed in items (1) and (2) committed in other jurisdictions or pursuant to federal law.

 (B) A school district may not employ an educator in any capacity whose South Carolina certificate is revoked pursuant to subsection (A).

HISTORY: 2004 Act No. 307, § 4, eff September 8, 2004.

Article 4

American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence Act

**SECTION 59-25-310. Authority to hire individuals with passport certificate issued by the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE).**

 In addition to individuals certified for employment as school teachers pursuant to Article 3 of this chapter, a school district may hire individuals who have received a passport certificate issued by the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) and who meet the requirements of this article in the content areas of biology, chemistry, English, mathematics, physics, or science. Additional areas of certification may be approved by the State Board of Education upon review of the longitudinal information required in Section 59-25-350.

HISTORY: 2007 Act No. 75, § 2, eff June 13, 2007.

**SECTION 59-25-320. State and national criminal records check.**

 A person who has received a passport certificate issued by the ABCTE must not be hired by a school district in South Carolina without submitting to the State Department of Education, Office of Educator Certification at the time of application a Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint card and without having undergone a criminal records check by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division and a national criminal records check supported by fingerprints and conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation pursuant to Section 59-25-115(B) completed within the previous eighteen months.

HISTORY: 2007 Act No. 75, § 2, eff June 13, 2007.

**SECTION 59-25-330. Alternative route certification.**

 A person who has received a passport certificate issued by the ABCTE, who has a minimum of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university or an institution with a teacher education program that has been approved by the State Board of Education for certification purposes, and who has met the requirements of Section 59-25-320 is considered to have met the requirements for certification and must be issued an appropriate alternative route certificate as determined by the State Board of Education. The alternative route certificate must be valid for one year and may be renewed annually for two additional years upon the successful completion of teaching and of the hiring district's induction program.

HISTORY: 2007 Act No. 75, § 2, eff June 13, 2007.

**SECTION 59-25-340. Requirement of passing adopted pedagogy examination.**

 A person who has received a passport certificate issued by the ABCTE, possesses an alternative route certificate, and has been initially hired by a school district must be required, as a condition for professional certification, to successfully pass the South Carolina adopted pedagogy examination.

HISTORY: 2007 Act No. 75, § 2, eff June 13, 2007.

**SECTION 59-25-350. Reports.**

 The State Department of Education shall submit annually by March thirty-first to the State Board of Education and the General Assembly the total number of individuals employed in South Carolina with a passport certificate issued by ABCTE by district and nonprivileged information collected on these individuals through the ADEPT reporting system.

HISTORY: 2007 Act No. 75, § 2, eff June 13, 2007.

**SECTION 59-25-360. Rights of persons hired.**

 A person who has completed all requirements of this article and has been hired by a school district has the same responsibilities and rights as other teachers hired by the district.

HISTORY: 2007 Act No. 75, § 2, eff June 13, 2007.

Article 5

Employment and Dismissal

**SECTION 59-25-410. Notification of employment for ensuing year; notification of assignment; exceptions; definition.**

Text of (A) effective until July 1, 2026. See Editor's Notes.

 (A) The boards of trustees of the several school districts annually before May first shall decide and notify, in writing, a teacher, as defined in Section 59-1-130, whom the district employs concerning his reemployment for the ensuing year. If the superintendent fails to notify a teacher who has been employed by a school district for a majority of the current school year of his status for the ensuing year, the teacher is considered to be reemployed for the ensuing year and the board shall issue a contract to him as though the board had reemployed him in the usual manner. Notice of the superintendent's recommendation not to renew an employment contract must be given in writing before May first.

Text of (A) effective July 1, 2026. See Editor's Notes.

 (A) The boards of trustees of the several school districts annually before May first shall decide and notify, in writing through the superintendent, a teacher, whom the district employs concerning his employment for the ensuing year. If a board of trustees fails to provide notification as provided in this section, the Department of Education shall assess a penalty of ten thousand dollars to be deducted from a district's state allocated funding per occurrence. If the board of trustees fails to notify a teacher who has been employed by a school district for a majority of the current school year of his status for the ensuing year, the teacher is considered to be reemployed for the ensuing year and the board shall issue a contract to him as though the board had reemployed him in the usual manner. The board of trustees must comply with the reporting requirements created by the Department of Education to ensure compliance with this section.

 (B) The written notification of reemployment must include a projected minimum salary schedule for the district for the coming school year as well as an agreement to provide a final salary schedule as soon as practicable upon completion of annual state and local appropriations processes. The district upon request shall provide a teacher with the factors used to determine their pay category on the salary schedule. The written notification of employment should indicate downward adjustments to the projected minimum salary schedule only in the event of a loss or reduction in the amount of state, local, or federal funding anticipated by the district at the time of adoption of the projected minimum salary schedule.

 (C) No later than fourteen calendar days before students are scheduled to return to school at the start of the school year, the superintendent, principal, where applicable, or supervisor shall notify the teacher of his tentative assignment for the ensuing school year. Once assigned to a school, the teacher shall not be reassigned to work at another location in the district unless the superintendent can demonstrate the need for reassignment. A teacher must be afforded written notice of at least five school days in advance of the reassignment unless the superintendent demonstrates that advance notice cannot be accomplished because of a critical student need or the teacher requested the reassignment. The local board of trustees must be notified in writing of all teacher reassignments.

 (D) This section does not apply to a teacher whose contract of employment or dismissal is under appeal under Section 59-25-450.

 (E) For purposes of this article, "teacher" means an employee possessing a professional certificate issued by the State Department of Education, except an employee working pursuant to a multiyear contract, employed by any school district to teach students in an academic setting.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-361; 1974 (58) 2343; 1976 Act No. 634 § 1; 1988 Act No. 392, § 1; 2016 Act No. 221 (H.3560), § 1, eff June 3, 2016; 2025 Act No. 12 (H.3196), § 4, eff July 1, 2025.

**SECTION 59-25-415. Rehiring priority for certified personnel dismissed for economic reasons.**

 Certified personnel who have taught in a school district for at least one year and who are dismissed for economic reasons have priority for being rehired to fill any vacancy for which they are qualified which occurs within two years from the date of their dismissal. A school district has complied with the requirements of this section by mailing a notice of intent to rehire to the teacher's last known address.

HISTORY: 1994 Act No. 497, Part II, § 15D.

**SECTION 59-25-420. Teacher required to notify board of acceptance; opportunity for hearing if not reemployed.**

 (A) A teacher who is reemployed by written notification pursuant to Section 59-25-410 shall before May eleventh notify the board of trustees in writing of his acceptance of the contract. Failure on the part of the teacher to notify the board of acceptance within the specified time limit is conclusive evidence of the teacher's rejection of the contract.

 (B) A teacher, receiving a notice that he will not be reemployed for the ensuing year, has the same notice and opportunity for a hearing provided in this article for a teacher dismissed for cause during the school year.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-362; 1974 (58) 2343; 2016 Act No. 221 (H.3560), § 2, eff June 3, 2016.

**SECTION 59-25-430. Dismissal of teachers; grounds; opportunity for hearing; suspension pending resolution of charges.**

 Any teacher may be dismissed at any time who shall fail, or who may be incompetent, to give instruction in accordance with the directions of the superintendent, or who shall otherwise manifest an evident unfitness for teaching; provided, however, that notice and an opportunity shall be afforded for a hearing prior to any dismissal. Evident unfitness for teaching is manifested by conduct such as, but not limited to, the following: persistent neglect of duty, willful violation of rules and regulations of district board of trustees, drunkenness, conviction of a violation of the law of this State or the United States, gross immorality, dishonesty, illegal use, sale or possession of drugs or narcotics.

 Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 59-25-450, when any teacher is charged with a violation of the law of this State or the United States which upon conviction may lead to, or be cited as a reason for, dismissal, such teacher may be suspended pending resolution of the charges and receive his usual compensation during the suspension period, such compensation not to exceed the term of his teaching contract. If the teacher is convicted, including pleading guilty or nolo contendere to the charges, he may then be subject to dismissal proceedings. If no conviction results, his suspension shall be terminated.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-363, 1974 (58) 2343; 1976 Act No. 634, § 2.

**SECTION 59-25-440. Written notice to teacher of possible dismissal; school administrator required to make reasonable effort to assist teacher in corrective measures; reasonable time for improvement required.**

 Whenever a superior, principal, where applicable, or supervisor charged with the supervision of a teacher finds it necessary to admonish a teacher for a reason that he believes may lead to, or be cited as a reason for, dismissal or cause the teacher not to be reemployed he shall: (1) bring the matter in writing to the attention of the teacher involved and make a reasonable effort to assist the teacher to correct whatever appears to be the cause of potential dismissal or failure to be reemployed and, (2) except as provided in Section 59-25-450, allow reasonable time for improvement.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-364; 1974 (58) 2343; 1976 Act No. 634, § 3.

**SECTION 59-25-450. Suspension of teachers; reinstatement.**

 Whenever a superintendent has reason to believe that cause exists for the dismissal of a teacher and when he is of the opinion that the immediate suspension of the teacher is necessary to protect the well-being of the children of the district or is necessary to remove substantial and material disruptive influences in the educational process, in the best interest of the children in the district, the superintendent may suspend the teacher without notice or without a hearing. The superintendent shall notify the teacher in writing of the suspension. Such written notice shall include the cause for suspension and the fact that a hearing before the board is available to the teacher upon request provided such request is made in writing within fifteen days as prescribed by Section 59-25-470.

 The salary of a suspended teacher shall cease as of the date the board sustains the suspension. If sufficient grounds for suspension are not subsequently found, the teacher shall be reinstated without loss of compensation.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-365; 1974 (58) 2343; 1976 Act No. 634, § 4.

**SECTION 59-25-460. Notice of dismissal; evidentiary hearings; costs.**

 (A) A teacher may not be dismissed unless written notice specifying the cause of dismissal first is given to the teacher by the superintendent and the teacher is given an opportunity for an evidentiary hearing. The superintendent or his designee may meet with the teacher before issuing a notice of dismissal to discuss alternative resolutions. The parties attending this meeting must have the option of having a representative present. This written notice must include the fact that a hearing before the board or its designee is available to the teacher upon request if the request is made in writing within fifteen days as provided in Section 59-25-470. Any such hearing must be public unless the teacher requests in writing that it be private. A board that chooses to delegate the evidentiary hearing to one or more designees, as provided in this section, shall indicate in board policy that it engages in this practice. The hearing process becomes effective when the board adopts the policy, and must be communicated to all affected employees within fifteen days. A subsequent change only may be made pursuant to the board policy revision process.

 (B)(1) If the board chooses to delegate the evidentiary hearing to a designee, the designee must be:

 (a) an attorney licensed to practice law in this State;

 (b) certified by the South Carolina Supreme Court as a mediator or arbitrator; and

 (c) designated by the board to hear all evidentiary hearings in the district for the school year, except when:

 (i) both parties consent to use an alternate hearing officer; or

 (ii) the district uses more than one designee, in which case the parties may by mutual consent select one of these designees for their hearing or, if they fail to reach such an agreement, the board randomly shall select one of its designees for the hearing.

 (2) If the designee holds the evidentiary hearing, he shall issue a written report and recommendation containing findings of facts and conclusions of law to the board, superintendent, and teacher within fifteen days after the hearing concludes. The superintendent and the teacher may submit a written response to this report and recommendation to the board within ten days after the date on which the report and recommendation are issued, after which the board shall issue a decision affirming or withdrawing the notice of suspension or dismissal within thirty days. In the interim, the board may conduct a hearing on the order to consider any written responses from the superintendent and teacher, but this hearing may not operate to extend the thirty-day limit in which the board shall issue its decision affirming or withdrawing the notice of suspension or dismissal. The board retains final decision-making authority regarding the teacher dismissal or suspension recommendation based on its consideration of the record, the report and recommendation, and any written submission of the superintendent and teacher.

 (C) If the board holds the evidentiary hearing, the board shall issue its decision within the thirty days after the hearing. This decision must be in writing and must include findings of facts and conclusions of law.

 (D) The board shall determine if the evidence shows good and just cause for the notice of suspension or dismissal, and accordingly shall render a decision to affirm or withdraw the notice of suspension or dismissal.

 (E) The District Board of Trustees as provided in subsection (C), or its designee, as provided in subsection (B), may issue subpoenas requiring the attendance of witnesses at the hearing and, at the request of the teacher against whom a charge is made, shall issue these subpoenas, but it may limit the number of these witnesses to ten. Testimony at a hearing must be taken under oath. A member of the board, or its designee, may administer oaths to witnesses. The board, or its designee, shall cause a record of the proceedings to be kept and shall employ a competent reporter to take stenographic or stenotype notes of all testimony.

 (F) If the board's decision is favorable to the teacher, the board shall pay the cost of the reporter's attendance and services at the hearing. If the decision is unfavorable to the teacher, one-half of the cost of the reporter's attendance and services must be borne by the teacher. A party desiring a transcript of the hearing must pay for the costs of obtaining the transcript.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-366; 1974 (58) 2343; 1976 Act No. 634, § 5; 2016 Act No. 221 (H.3560), § 3, eff June 3, 2016.

**SECTION 59-25-470. Request for hearing; determination by board; time and place of hearing; procedures.**

 (A) Within fifteen days after receipt of notice of suspension or dismissal, a teacher may serve upon the chairman of the board or the superintendent a written request for a hearing before the board, or its designee.

 (B) If the teacher fails to make such a request, or after a hearing as provided in this article, the board shall take action and shall enter an order as it considers lawful and appropriate.

 (C) The hearing must be held by the board, or its designee, within forty-five days after the request is served. A notice of the time and place of the hearing must be given the teacher not less than five days before the date of the hearing.

 (D) The teacher may be present with counsel at the hearing, and may cross-examine witnesses, may offer evidence and witnesses, and present defenses to the charges. The board, or its designee, shall order the appearance of any witness requested by the teacher, subject to the limitations of Section 59-25-460. The superintendent shall initiate the introduction of evidence in substantiation of the charges.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-367; 1974 (58) 2343; 1976 Act No. 634, § 6; 2016 Act No. 221 (H.3560), § 4, eff June 3, 2016.

**SECTION 59-25-480. Appeals; costs and damages.**

 (A) The decision of the district board of trustees is final, unless within thirty days afterward an appeal is made to the court of common pleas of any county in which the major portion of such district lies.

 (B) Notice of the appeal and the grounds thereof shall be filed with the district board of trustees. The district board shall, within thirty days thereafter, file a certified copy of the transcript record with the clerk of such court. An appeal from the order of the circuit court shall be taken in the manner provided by the South Carolina Appellate Court Rules. If the decision of the board is reversed on appeal, on a motion of either party the trial court shall order reinstatement and shall determine the amount for which the board shall be liable for actual damages and court costs. In no event shall any liability extend beyond two years from the effective date of dismissal. Amounts earned or amounts earnable with reasonable diligence by the person wrongfully suspended shall be deducted from any back pay.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-368; 1974 (58) 2343; 1999 Act No. 55, § 54; 2016 Act No. 221 (H.3560), § 5, eff June 3, 2016.

**SECTION 59-25-490. Depositions.**

 A party to a proceeding conducted pursuant to this chapter may depose a witness within or without the State and either by commission or de bene esse. The deposition must be taken pursuant and subject to the same provisions, conditions, and restrictions that apply to taking of similar depositions in actions brought in the court of common pleas. The same rules with respect to the giving of notice to the opposite party, the taking and transcribing of testimony, the transmission and certification of them and matters of practice relating to them apply.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-369; 1974 (58) 2343; 2016 Act No. 221 (H.3560), § 6, eff June 3, 2016.

**SECTION 59-25-500. Service of subpoenas; witness fees.**

 The county sheriffs and their respective deputies shall serve all subpoenas of the district board and shall receive the same fees as are now provided by law for like service. Each witness who appears in obedience to such subpoenas shall receive for attendance the fees and mileage of witnesses in civil cases in courts of the county in which the hearing is held.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-370; 1974 (58) 2343.

**SECTION 59-25-510. Service of notices.**

 All notices to be given under this article by the district board shall be given to both parties and the notices herein required to be given by a party shall be served upon the opposite party prior to the filing thereof. All such notices may be served by registered mail.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-370.1; 1974 (58) 2343.

**SECTION 59-25-520. Powers and duties of court of common pleas; warrant for production of witnesses.**

 The court of common pleas shall, on application of the district board, enforce by proper proceedings the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production and examination of books, papers and records and shall have the power to punish as for contempt of court, by a fine or imprisonment or both, the unexcused failure or refusal to attend and give testimony or produce books, papers and records as may have been required in any subpoena issued by the district board. The district board may issue to the sheriff of the county in which any hearing is held a warrant requiring him to produce at the hearing any witness who shall have ignored or failed to comply with any subpoena issued by the district board and duly served upon such witness. Such a warrant shall authorize the sheriff to arrest and produce at the hearing such witness, and it shall be his duty to do so; but the failure of a witness so to appear in response to any such subpoena may be excused on the same grounds as provided by law in the courts of this State as to the attendance of witnesses and jurors.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-370.2; 1974 (58) 2343.

**SECTION 59-25-530. Failure to comply with contract without written consent; residence changes.**

 (A) Any educator who fails to comply with the provisions of his contract without the written consent of the school board is considered to be in breach of contract. Notwithstanding Section 59-25-150, a breach of contract resulting from the execution of an employment contract with another board within the State without the consent of the board first employing the educator makes void any subsequent contract with any other school district in South Carolina. Upon the formal complaint of the school board, substantiated by conclusive evidence, the state board may suspend or revoke the educator's certificate. The state board shall not hear a complaint from a school board pursuant to this section unless it is received within sixty days of the breach of contract. The period for educator certificate suspension due to breach of contract must begin on the date such contract is breached with the district and run for a period of time deemed appropriate by the State Board of Education, not to exceed six months from the date of breach. During this suspension period, the educator may not be signed to an employment contract by any public school board in South Carolina. The department shall provide notification of the suspension to other state educator licensing authorities.

 (B) An educator who has a bona fide residence change to a noncontiguous county during the term of the educator's contract is not considered to be in breach of contract as provided in this section. An educator has the burden of proving a bona fide residence change to the local school board. Factors to consider in determining a bona fide residence change shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

 (1) address on legal documents and bank accounts;

 (2) qualification for the reduced four percent property tax assessment on a primary residence;

 (3) address on driver's license or official identification cards; and

 (4) voter registration address.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-370.3; 1974 (58) 2343; 2025 Act No. 12 (H.3196), § 7, eff July 1, 2025.

Article 7

Remedy for Discrimination Against Teachers

**SECTION 59-25-710. Teacher discriminated against in fixing salary may file complaint.**

 Any school teacher who may feel that he has been discriminated against on any ground or for any cause whatsoever by a board of trustees in fixing the salary of such teacher, in the exercise of the wide discretion conferred upon trustees by law in the fixing of teachers' salaries, may file a complaint for the purpose of having such discrimination abated and in so doing shall follow the procedure hereinafter set out.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-381; 1952 Code § 21-381; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-720. Complaint filed with county board.**

 Such teacher may at any time, during the period for which he has been employed, file with the county board of education of the county in which the school is located a complaint in writing which shall set forth briefly the manner and method by which the alleged discrimination is claimed to have occurred. Any number of teachers that are employed by the same school district may join in the filing of a complaint.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-382; 1952 Code § 21-382; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-730. Hearing on complaint.**

 Upon the filing of such complaint, the county board of education shall fix a date for the hearing thereof and at least ten days prior to the date fixed shall notify the complainant and the board of trustees of the school district in which the teacher is employed of the time and place of such hearing. It shall set forth in such notice the grounds of such alleged discrimination.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-383; 1952 Code § 21-383; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-740. Process and procedure shall be summary and simple.**

 The process and procedure under this article shall be as summary and simple as reasonably may be. The county board of education shall have the power, for the purpose of this article, to subpoena witnesses, to administer oaths and to examine such parts of any books and records as relate to the questions involved. Any party to such proceedings may cause to be taken the depositions of witnesses within or without the State and either by commission or de bene esse. Such depositions shall be taken in accordance with and subject to the same provisions, conditions and restrictions as apply to the taking of like depositions in civil actions at law in the court of common pleas, and the same rules with respect to the giving of notice to the opposite party, the taking and transcribing of testimony, the transmission and certification thereof and matters of practice relating thereto shall apply.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-384; 1952 Code § 21-384; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-750. Service of subpoenas; witness fees.**

 The county sheriffs and their respective deputies shall serve all subpoenas of the county board and shall receive the same fees as are now provided by law for like service. Each witness who appears in obedience to such subpoena shall receive for attendance the fees and mileage of witnesses in civil cases in courts of the county in which the hearing is held.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-385; 1952 Code § 21-385; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-760. Service of notices.**

 All notices to be given under this article by either the county board or the State Board shall be given to both parties and the notices herein required to be given by a party shall be served upon the opposite party prior to the filing thereof. All of such notices may be served by registered mail.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-386; 1952 Code § 21-386; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-770. Powers and duties of court of common pleas; warrant for production of witnesses.**

 The court of common pleas shall, on application of the county board, enforce by proper proceedings the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production and examination of books, papers and records and shall have the power to punish as for contempt of court, by a fine or imprisonment or both, the unexcused failure or refusal to attend and give testimony or produce books, papers and records as may have been required in any subpoena issued by the county board. The county board may issue to the sheriff of the county in which any hearing is held a warrant requiring him to produce at the hearing any witness who shall have ignored or failed to comply with any subpoena issued by the county board and duly served upon such witness. Such warrant shall authorize the sheriff to arrest and produce at the hearing such witness, and it shall be his duty so to do. But the failure of a witness so to appear in response to any such subpoena may be excused on the same grounds as provided by law in the courts of this State as to the attendance of witnesses and jurors.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-387; 1952 Code § 21-387; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-780. Hearing; decision.**

 The hearing before the county board shall be open to the public and shall be stenographically reported, and the county board may contract for the reporting of such hearing. The county board shall hear the parties at issue and their attorneys, if any, and shall determine the matter in a summary manner setting forth its findings and conclusions in writing. If it shall find that such teacher shall have been discriminated against, it shall require the board of trustees to discontinue such discrimination. The county board shall give notice by registered mail to both parties of its decision.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-388; 1952 Code § 21-388; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-790. Basis of decision.**

 The county board, in passing upon such matters, is hereby vested with full discretion to the same extent as if the duty of fixing salaries of teachers had been originally imposed upon the county board and shall have the right to take into consideration changed conditions arising since the issuance of the certificates held by the teachers involved and other facts that will be helpful in rendering a just decision.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-389; 1952 Code § 21-389; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-800. Reclassification of all teachers in district.**

 The county board may, in determining whether or not a discrimination exists, recommend that the State Board of Education require all teachers in the district to be examined and recertified under the procedure then in force for the certification of teachers as to their qualifications and may thereupon require the trustees of such district to classify such teachers in accordance with such recertification for the purpose of fixing their salaries, to the end that the salaries of such teachers shall be based upon the value of the services rendered, it being found as a fact that each grade of teachers' certificates now outstanding is held by teachers of greatly varying efficiency, abilities and accomplishments. Should no appeal be taken from a decision of the county board making such recommendation, the State Board of Education shall carry out such recommendation.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-390; 1952 Code § 21-390; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-810. Appeal to State Board of Education.**

 Within thirty days after the receipt of any such notice of such decision of the county board, any party thereto shall have the right to appeal to the State Board of Education by filing a notice of appeal, stating the grounds thereof, with the county board of education. Upon such appeal being filed, the county board, within thirty days thereafter, shall file a full and complete certified transcript of the proceedings had before it with the State Board of Education. Upon receipt of such appeal, the State Board of Education shall fix a time and place for the hearing thereof and give notice, by registered mail, to the parties involved. Such appeal shall be heard upon the transcript of the proceedings from the county board and such other investigation and additional testimony as the State Board may elect to take, all of which, if taken, shall be reported and made a part of the record. The State Board of Education shall review all questions of law and fact and, in determining the matter, exercise its discretion as an original duty imposed upon it. All powers and remedies herein conferred on county boards as to subpoenaing witnesses, enforcing attendance, taking and production of evidence and other procedural matters are hereby conferred upon the State Board.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-391; 1952 Code § 21-391; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-820. Reclassification on order of State Board of Education.**

 The State Board of Education, upon its own initiative, in the accomplishment of justice in the matter, may require all teachers in the district from which the appeal came to be examined and recertified under the procedure then in force for the certification of teachers as to their qualifications and shall thereupon require the trustees of such district to classify such teachers in accordance with such recertification for the purpose of fixing their salaries, to the end that the salaries of such teachers shall be based upon the value of services rendered.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-392; 1952 Code § 21-392; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-830. Finality of findings of fact by State Board of Education; appeal on errors of law.**

 The findings of fact by the State Board of Education are final and conclusive as to all parties, but any party, within thirty days, may appeal to the Administrative Law Court as provided in Section 1-23-380(B) and Section 1-23-600(D), to review error of law only, by filing with the State Board of Education and the Administrative Law Court notice of the appeal and of the grounds for the appeal. The state board shall file a certified copy of the record with the Administrative Law Court in accordance with its rules of procedure. A party may have judicial review of the decision of the administrative law judge as provided by law.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-393; 1952 Code § 21-393; 1947 (45) 110; 1999 Act No. 55, § 55; 2006 Act No. 387, § 44, eff July 1, 2006.

**SECTION 59-25-840. Filing of unappealed decision; enforcement.**

 Any decision of either the county board or the State Board which shall become final by reason of no appeal being taken therefrom as herein provided shall be filed in the office of the clerk of court of the county in which the complaint arose within ten days after such decision becomes final by the board rendering the decision. Any party thereto shall have the right to apply to the circuit court of such county for the enforcement of such decision and the court shall enforce such decision in the same manner as judgments of such court are enforced.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-394; 1952 Code § 21-394; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-850. Compensation received prior to filing of complaint not affected.**

 Nothing contained herein shall give any teacher any right to claim compensation in addition to that received for the period prior to the filing of the complaint with the county board as provided in Section 59-25-720.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-395; 1952 Code § 21-395; 1947 (45) 110.

**SECTION 59-25-860. Costs; fees of clerks of boards.**

 Costs shall be taxed in the proceedings authorized hereunder by the respective boards in accordance with the procedure and limitations applicable to taxing costs in a civil action at law in the court of common pleas. The clerk of each board shall be allowed the same fees as clerks of court of the county in which the proceedings arose, and any other fees or costs allowed by law in the court of common pleas in actions at law, and which are taxable as costs, shall apply in the proceedings before the boards and be taxable as costs. The costs so taxed of both parties shall be paid by the State Board of Education.

HISTORY: 1962 Code § 21-396; 1952 Code § 21-396; 1947 (45) 110.