**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 59‑1‑425, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE AUTHORITY OF EACH LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO ESTABLISH ANNUAL SCHOOL CALENDARS FOR SCHOOLS UNDER ITS JURISDICTION, SO AS TO PROVIDE THE AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH THE OPENING DATE FOR THE ANNUAL SCHOOL CALENDAR OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN CHESTER COUNTY, CHESTERFIELD COUNTY, CHEROKEE COUNTY, FAIRFIELD COUNTY, LANCASTER COUNTY, UNION COUNTY, AND YORK COUNTY.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 59‑1‑425(A) of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 260 of 2006, is amended to read:

“(A) Each local school district board of trustees of the State shall have the authority to establish an annual school calendar for teachers, staff, and students. Additionally, each school district in Chester County, Chesterfield County, Cherokee County, Fairfield County, Lancaster County, Union County, and York County may establish the opening date for each school in the district. The statutory school term is one hundred ninety days annually and shall consist of a minimum of one hundred eighty days of instruction covering at least nine calendar months. However, beginning with the 2007‑2008 school year the opening date for students must not be before the third Monday in August, except for schools operating on a year‑round modified school calendar and, beginning with the 2015‑1016 school year, schools in Chester County, Chesterfield County, Cherokee County, Fairfield County, Lancaster County, Union County, and York County. Three days must be used for collegial professional development based upon the educational standards as required by Section 59‑18‑300. The professional development shall address, at a minimum, academic achievement standards including strengthening teachers’ knowledge in their content area, teaching techniques, and assessment. No more than two days may be used for preparation of opening of schools and the remaining five days may be used for teacher planning, academic plans, and parent conferences. The number of instructional hours in an instructional day may vary according to local board policy and does not have to be uniform among the schools in the district.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor and is applicable beginning with the 2015‑2016 school year.

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