**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 59‑1‑425, AS AMENDED, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE OPENING DATE FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOL YEAR, SO AS TO ELIMINATE THE PROVISION REQUIRING THE OPENING DATE FOR SCHOOLS TO BE BEFORE THE THIRD MONDAY IN AUGUST, AND TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ESTABLISH THE OPENING DATE FOR EACH OF ITS SCHOOLS.

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 last amended by Act 281 of 2016, is further amended to read:

“(A) A local school district board of trustees of the State ~~has the authority to~~ shall establish an annual school calendar for teachers, staff, and students, to include an opening date for each school in the district. The statutory school term is one hundred ninety days annually and must 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.~~ Three days must be used for collegial professional development based upon the educational standards as required by Section 59‑18‑300. The professional development must 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.

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