**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**H. 4257**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. J.E. Johnson, Lowe, Mitchell, Yow, Brittain, Jordan, B. Newton, Caskey, Gilliam, Rankin, Schuessler, Hayes, Guest, Crawford, Gagnon, McCabe, Pedalino and Hiott

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Introduced in the House on March 27, 2025

Last Amended on April 30, 2025

Currently residing in the House

Summary: Excused student absences

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 3/27/2025 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 16)

 3/27/2025 House Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works** (House Journal‑page 16)

 4/2/2025 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor:
 Brittain, Jordan, B. Newton, Caskey,
 Gilliam, Rankin, Schuessler, Hayes, Guest,
 Crawford, Gagnon, McCabe, Pedalino, Hiott

 4/29/2025 House Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education and Public Works** (House Journal‑page 6)

 4/30/2025 Scrivener's error corrected

 4/30/2025 House Amended

 4/30/2025 House Read second time

 4/30/2025 House Roll call Yeas-110 Nays-0

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=4257&session=126&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[03/27/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/4257_20250327.docx)

[04/29/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/4257_20250429.docx)

[04/30/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/4257_20250430.docx)

Indicates Matter Stricken

Indicates New Matter

Committee Report

April 29, 2025

H. 4257

Introduced by Reps. J. E. Johnson, Lowe, Mitchell, Yow, Brittain, Jordan, B. Newton, Caskey, Gilliam, Rankin, Schuessler, Hayes, Guest, Crawford, Gagnon, McCabe, Pedalino and Hiott

S. Printed 4/29/25--H. [SEC 4/30/2025 10:25 AM]

Read the first time March 27, 2025

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The committee on House Education and Public Works

To whom was referred a Bill (H. 4257) to amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by amending Section 59‑5‑65, relating to the requirement that the State Board of Education shall establish a uniform system, etc., respectfully

Report:

That they have duly and carefully considered the same, and recommend that the same do pass with amendment:

 Amend the bill, as and if amended, by striking SECTIONS 1 and 2 and inserting:

SECTION X. Section 59-1-462 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 59-1-462. Each school district, within ninety days after the effective date of this section, shall adopt a policy, to include language to ensure that participants are academically in good standing, that authorizes a student to be excused from school absences, not to exceed ten school days per school year, to participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization experience in which student participation and learning outcomes are directed by a certified teacher for assessment of competencies or participation in any interscholastic activity authorized for student participation by the school or school district, regardless of whether the activity is sanctioned by the South Carolina High School League or other entity that governs, sanctions, or operates interscholastic athletic and intramural activities and competitions. Participation in such Career and Technical Student Organization experience may include, but is not limited to, scheduled events of state-level Future Farmers of America (FFA) organizations, the national FFA organization, and 4-H programs as part of organized competitions or exhibitions. The student and his parent or legal guardian are responsible for obtaining and completing assignments missed while the student participates in any such Career and Technical Student Organization experiences or interscholastic activity authorized for student participation by the school or school district.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

SHANNON ERICKSON for Committee.

statement of estimated fiscal impact

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

State Expenditure

This bill amends the requirements for school district policies on excused absences for specific activities. The bill requires the district’s policy to include students who participate in an interscholastic activity authorized by the school or school district, regardless of whether the activity is sanctioned by the South Carolina High School League or another entity, to the provision that allows students to be excused from school absences. Additionally, the bill requires the policy to include that students are to be academically in good standing in order to participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization experience or an interscholastic activity.

**S.C. Department of Education.** This bill will have no expenditure impact on SCDE since it does not alter the responsibilities of the department.

**State Agency Schools.** The Governor’s School for Agriculture at John de la Howe, the Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics, the Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities, the School for the Deaf and Blind, and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact since any expenses to implement the provisions of the bill can be managed with existing staff and appropriations.

Local Expenditure

This bill amends the requirements for school district policies on excused absences for specific activities. The bill requires the district’s policy to include students who participate in an interscholastic activity authorized by the school or school district, regardless of whether the activity is sanctioned by the South Carolina High School League or another entity, to the provision that allows students to be excused from school absences. Additionally, the bill requires the policy to include that students are to be academically in good standing in order to participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization experience or an interscholastic activity.

SCDE contacted the seventy-two regular public school districts and the three public charter school districts regarding the impact of the bill as introduced and received responses from sixteen districts. While districts may need to update internal policies and train staff, all responding districts indicate that the bill as introduced will have no impact on expenditures. Based on these responses, we anticipate that the changes in the bill as amended will not have an impact.

Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director

Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office

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A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 59‑5‑65, RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL ESTABLISH A UNIFORM SYSTEM OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ENFORCEMENT, SO AS TO PROVIDE THIS SYSTEM MUST REQUIRE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO APPROVE STUDENT ABSENCES FOR PARTICIPATION IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED BY THE SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE ACTIVITY IS SANCTIONED BY THE south carolina HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE OR OTHER INTERSCHOLASTIC SANCTIONING ORGANIZATION; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 59‑65‑90, RELATING TO RULES AND REGULATIONS THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL ESTABLISH TO DEFINE LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL ABSENCES UNDER COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE STATUTES, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 59‑5‑65(4) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (4) Establish on or before July 1, 1985, regulations prescribing a uniform system of enforcement by the various school districts of the state compulsory attendance laws and regulations promulgated pursuant to Section 59‑65‑90. This uniform system of enforcement must require, or be construed to require, administrators to approve student absences required for participation in any interscholastic activity authorized for student participation by the school or school district, regardless of whether the activity is sanctioned by the South Carolina High School League or other entity that governs, sanctions, or operates interscholastic athletic and intramural activities and competitions.

SECTION 2. Section 59‑65‑90 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 59‑65‑90. (A) The State Board of Education shall establish regulations defining lawful and unlawful absences beyond those specifically named in this article and additional regulations as are necessary for the orderly enrollment of pupils so as to provide for uniform dates of entrance. These regulations shall require:

 (1) that school officials shall immediately intervene to encourage the student’s future attendance when the student has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences; and

 (2) that the district board of trustees or its designee shall promptly approve or disapprove any student absence in excess of ten days.; and

 (3) that administrators approve student absences required for participation in any interscholastic activity approved for student participation by the school or school district, regardless of whether the activity is sanctioned by the South Carolina High School League or other interscholastic sanctioning organization.

 (B) As used in this section, “intervene” means to identify the reasons for the child’s continued absence and to develop a plan in conjunction with the student and his parent or guardian to improve his future attendance.

 (C) Provided, However, That nothing withinNo provision in this section shall interfere with the Board’s authority to at any time refer a child to a truancy prevention program or to the court pursuant to Section 59‑65‑50.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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