**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**S. 78**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Senators Hembree, Young, Zell and Devine

Companion/Similar bill(s): 88

Document Path: SEDU-0002KG25.docx

Introduced in the Senate on January 14, 2025

Introduced in the House on February 25, 2025

Last Amended on April 30, 2025

Currently residing in the House

Summary: Work Experience Credit for Educators

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 12/11/2024 Senate Prefiled

 12/11/2024 Senate Referred to Committee on **Education**

 1/14/2025 Senate Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal‑page 62)

 1/14/2025 Senate Referred to Committee on **Education** (Senate Journal‑page 62)

 2/12/2025 Senate Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education** (Senate Journal‑page 5)

 2/19/2025 Senate Committee Amendment Adopted (Senate Journal‑page 19)

 2/19/2025 Senate Read second time (Senate Journal‑page 19)

 2/19/2025 Senate Roll call Ayes-41 Nays-0 (Senate Journal‑page 19)

 2/20/2025 Senate Read third time and sent to House (Senate Journal‑page 15)

 2/25/2025 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 23)

 2/25/2025 House Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works** (House Journal‑page 23)

 2/25/2025 Scrivener's error corrected

 4/24/2025 House Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Education and Public Works** (House Journal‑page 47)

 4/30/2025 House Amended

 4/30/2025 House Read second time

 4/30/2025 House Roll call Yeas-116 Nays-0

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=78&session=126&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[12/11/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/78_20241211.docx)

[02/12/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/78_20250212.docx)

[02/19/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/78_20250219.docx)

[04/24/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/78_20250424.docx)

Indicates Matter Stricken

Indicates New Matter

Committee Report

April 24, 2025

S. 78

Introduced by Senators Hembree, Young, Zell and Devine

S. Printed 4/24/25--H.

Read the first time February 25, 2025

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The committee on House Education and Public Works

To whom was referred a Bill (S. 78) to amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 59-25-60 so as to provide that an individual's prior work experience may be awarded on an initial teaching, 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, SECTION 1, by striking Section 59-25-60(B) and inserting:

 (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 their pay adjusted for the currentat 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.

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 allows an individual’s prior years of work experience to be awarded on an educator certificate if the prior experience is 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 work experience. If additional years of experience are awarded, the eligible individual is entitled to a pay adjustment for the current school year to reflect the new experience step on the employing district’s salary schedule.

**S.C. Department of Education.** SCDE indicates that this bill will increase General Fund expenses by $191,160 in FY 2025-26. Of this amount, $67,160 is for salary and fringe benefits for 1.0 FTE to evaluate and process certification requests, $4,000 is for equipment costs, and $120,000 is for reprogramming the SC Educator system to distinguish between teaching experience credit and non-teaching or related experience. Expenses will decrease to $67,160 beginning in FY 2026-27 for the 1.0 FTE. SCDE will request a General Fund appropriation increase to fund these expenses.

**State Agency Schools.** The impact on state agency schools will vary.The Governor’s School for Agriculture at John de la Howe and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact since they can manage any additional costs with existing appropriations. The Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics indicates that this bill will have no expenditure impact since many of its instructors are non-certified and the agency currently gives its instructors credit for prior work experience in a related field. The School for the Deaf and Blind reports that provisions of bill allowing individuals to receive credit for prior work experience would have an expenditure impact on the agency, but the cost is undetermined. The Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities previously indicated that similar legislation would have no expenditure impact since the agency currently hires teachers with a minimum of three years of experience and already accounts for additional work history in its budgeted expenses.

Local Expenditure

This bill allows an individual’s prior years of work experience to be awarded on an educator certificate if the prior experience is 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 work experience. If additional years of experience are awarded, the eligible individual is entitled to a pay adjustment for the current school year to reflect the new experience step on the employing district’s salary schedule.

SCDE indicates that of the 77,832 educators who hold a current educator certificate based on an undergraduate or graduate program or based on reciprocity, the department does not have data to determine how many of these educators may have qualifying work experience and would be eligible for additional experience credit. However, SCDE indicates that current CTE work-based and alternative route teachers and career changers now holding a professional certificate based on their successful completion of a traditional (e.g., MAT) or alternative route program (e.g., PACE, Teachers of Tomorrow, Advanced Fine Arts, etc.) are likely to have qualifying prior work experience. SCDE reports that 1,414 educators hold a current CTE work-based certificate, while 2,155 educators hold a current alternative route certificate and are pursuing a professional certificate. Additionally, 5,836 educators hold a current valid professional certificate based on their successful completion of an alternative route program. In total, SCDE estimates that at least 9,405 educators are likely to be eligible to receive credit for prior work experience.

The additional cost per teacher per year of work experience credit will vary depending on the teacher’s degree and years of teaching experience and ranges from $250 to $1,500. For reference, using the FY 2024-25 State Minimum Teacher Salary Schedule as a guide, RFA estimates that the cost of one year of experience credit averages $500 for teachers with a bachelor’s degree, $563 for a teacher with a master’s degree, and $786 for a teacher with a doctorate. We estimate the cost of five years of additional experience credit for teachers at various places on the FY 2024-25 proposed State Minimum Teacher Salary Schedule as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of Degree | Years of Teaching Experience | Years of Prior Work Experience Credit | Estimated Cost Per Teacher |
| Bachelor’s Degree | 0 | 5 | $2,000 |
| Master’s Degree | 0 | 5 | $2,000 |
| Doctorate Degree | 0 | 5 | $2,500 |
| Bachelor’s Degree | 5 | 5 | $3,000 |
| Master’s Degree | 5 | 5 | $3,000 |
| Doctorate Degree | 5 | 5 | $5,750 |
| Bachelor’s Degree | 10 | 5 | $2,500 |
| Master’s Degree | 10 | 5 | $3,500 |
| Doctorate Degree | 10 | 5 | $6,250 |

The cost to the local school districts to provide additional compensation to eligible teachers will vary depending upon the number of teachers entitled to additional credit, the additional years of experience to which each teacher is entitled, and where each teacher falls on the salary schedule.

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 ADDING SECTION 59-25-60 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT AN INDIVIDUAL'S PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE MAY BE AWARDED ON AN INITIAL TEACHING CERTIFICATE IF THE PRIOR EXPERIENCE IS IN OR RELATED TO THE CONTENT FIELD OF THE CERTIFICATE, AND TO PROVIDE THAT EXISTING CERTIFICATE HOLDERS MAY RECEIVE CREDIT FOR PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 25, Title 59 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

 Section 59‑25‑60. (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 their pay adjusted for the current 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.

SECTION 2. The State Department of Education shall develop guidelines for purposes of implementation of this act and make available the non-teaching occupational experience verification form described in this act no later than one hundred-eighty-days after the approval by the Governor.

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

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