



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT

WWW.RFA.SC.GOV • (803)734-3793

This fiscal impact statement is produced in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws and House and Senate rules. The focus of the analysis is on governmental expenditure and revenue impacts and may not provide a comprehensive summary of the legislation.

Bill Number: H. 4984 Introduced on January 20, 2026
Subject: South Carolina Dual Enrollment Opportunity Act
Requestor: House Education and Public Works
RFA Analyst(s): Bryant
Impact Date: February 3, 2026

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill enacts the “South Carolina Dual Enrollment Opportunity Act”. The bill requires the State Board of Education, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (Tech Board), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) to adopt a statewide policy for dual enrollment and provides requirements for the policy. The bill also repeals Section 59-59-210, relating to articulation agreements between school districts and State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs).

CHE indicates that this bill will increase expenses by approximately \$24,000 beginning in FY 2026-27 for salary and fringe benefits for 0.25 FTE (Program Manager I) to conduct audits of public and private four-year colleges and universities and the University of South Carolina 2-year branch campuses to examine compliance with state dual enrollment policy. CHE reports that it will request a General Fund appropriation increase for the expenses.

This bill will have no expenditure impact for the Education Oversight Committee (EOC). EOC indicates that it can manage the provisions of the bill with existing appropriations.

This bill will have no expenditure impact on the S.C. Department of Education (SCDE). SCDE reports that the department is currently preparing to staff a time-limited position to support secondary school counselors and career counselor specialists serving grades six through twelve. Therefore, while the bill establishes additional coordination, guidance, and oversight responsibilities related to dual enrollment policy alignment, reporting, and compliance, SCDE anticipates that these activities can be accomplished with existing staff and resources.

The expenditure impact of the bill on colleges and universities will vary. Coastal Carolina University (CCU) indicates that this bill will increase expenses by approximately \$70,000 beginning in FY 2026-27 for salary and fringe benefits for 1.0 FTE (dual enrollment coordinator) to ensure compliance with the provisions of the bill. CCU also notes that since the university does not currently award or process summer scholarship applications for dual enrollment students and does not have access to S.C. Lottery Tuition Assistance Program (LTAP) or S.C. Workforce Industry Needs Scholarship (SC WINS) funds, expenses may increase by an unknown amount in order to satisfy the requirement that IHLs use available scholarship funds for dual enrollment courses taken by students during the summer term. The College of Charleston (CofC) indicates that the overall expenditure impact of this bill is undetermined since it is

uncertain how a cost-sharing model to provide tuition-free dual enrollment opportunities for all eligible high school students will work and how many students will enroll. CofC also indicates that outside of Section 59-60-210, it estimates an annual recurring cost of approximately \$152,000 beginning in FY 2026-27 for salary and fringe benefits for an academic advisor (1.0 FTE), additional staff for the Registrar's Office (0.5 FTE), clerical assessment (0.25 FTE), and admissions clerical work (0.5 FTE) to have adequate staff to comply with the requirements of the bill. CofC notes that this estimate does not include any non-recurring database or other set-up costs. Francis Marion University (FMU) anticipates that while it may absorb certain duties within existing structures, this bill broadens the scope and amount of administrative processes, resulting in new responsibilities, increased recurring workloads, higher transaction volumes, and higher audit exposure across the dual enrollment lifecycle. FMU estimates that the bill will increase expenses by approximately \$127,000 in FY 2026-27. Of this amount, \$123,000 is for recurring expenses, including \$114,500 for salary and fringe benefits for 2.0 FTEs (Student Services Program Coordinator I, Student Services Program Coordinator II) to assist with compliance, data management, program coordination, and implementation. Other recurring operating expenses include \$3,500 for technology expenses, \$1,500 for travel, and \$3,500 for office and operational costs. The remaining \$4,000 is for non-recurring technology expenses. FMU will request a General Fund appropriation increase to cover the expenses. Lander University (Lander) indicates that all costs associated with this bill can be managed with existing appropriations. Winthrop University (Winthrop) indicates that this bill will increase expenses by approximately \$277,000 in FY 2026-27. Of this amount, \$227,000 is for recurring expenses, including \$172,000 for salary and fringe benefits for 2.0 FTEs (dual enrollment reporting coordinators) to be responsible for data collection and reporting related to dual enrollment activity, \$35,000 for a reporting system, and \$20,000 for school counselor training stipends. The remaining \$50,000 is for non-recurring expenses, including \$30,000 to hire a contractor to develop the required dashboards and \$20,000 to set up a reporting system.

Further, we anticipate that this bill may increase the number of students participating in dual enrollment programs since they will be able to participate at no cost. However, the potential increase in enrollment and subsequent expenses associated with this increase is unknown.

The expenditure impact of this bill on the State Agency Schools will vary. The Governor's School at John de law Howe indicates that the agency has a dual enrollment program that is currently satisfying the requirements of the bill. The Governor's School for Arts and Humanities indicates that this bill will have no expenditure impact, as the agency can manage the provisions of the bill with existing appropriations. The Governor's School for Science and Mathematics reports that it currently operates a dual enrollment model under which students do not pay tuition or fees for dual enrollment coursework. The agency anticipates that any increase in costs due to the need for administrative alignment or new reporting policies will likely be minimal and can be managed with existing appropriations. The School for the Deaf and the Blind indicates that this bill may increase costs by an amount up to \$50,000 beginning in FY 2026-27 for additional resources such as sign language interpretation and transportation for students participating in a dual enrollment program. The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School reports that the agency has a GED program, and as such, does not offer credits that would affect a dual enrollment program.

This bill may decrease revenue by an undetermined amount for IHLs by requiring tuition-free dual enrollment opportunities for all eligible high school students and requiring school districts, including charter school authorizers, to develop a cost sharing model with IHLs. By requiring tuition-free enrollment, IHLs may lose revenue from tuition previously paid by dual enrollment students. The amount of the decrease in revenue will depend upon the number of enrolled students that would have paid tuition and the type of cost-sharing model developed. For reference, Winthrop University indicates that its projected dual enrollment revenue for FY 2026-27 is approximately \$162,000. The Tech Board indicates that there are over 21,000 dual enrollment students in their system. There are multiple arrangements with different colleges and universities and among the different school districts. The colleges and universities receive funding from LTAP or SC WINS and payments from the school districts. Additionally, some colleges and universities waive dual enrollment charges. However, after the LTAP and SC WINS funds are applied and payments from school districts are received, students are paying approximately \$8,000,000. Under the bill, these students will no longer be charged tuition, and the Tech Board estimates that total revenue for technical colleges will be reduced by approximately \$8,000,000 annually beginning in FY 2026-27.

The expenditure impact of this bill on the local school districts will vary. SCDE surveyed the seventy-two regular school districts and three charter school districts and received responses from six districts. Five of the responding districts indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact. One responding district indicates that this bill will increase expenditures by approximately \$307,000 to cover textbook and course fees at an average cost of \$600 for the 512 students currently enrolled in dual enrollment credit classes.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 20, 2026

State Expenditure

This bill enacts the “South Carolina Dual Enrollment Opportunity Act”. The bill requires all courses eligible for dual enrollment status to be approved by the EOC beginning with the 2029-2030 school year. The EOC must consult with SCDE, CHE, and the Tech Board in making its determination on course eligibility. The bill also requires the State Board of Education, Tech Board, and CHE to adopt a statewide policy governing dual enrollment beginning with the 2027-28 school year. The bill further specifies that all IHLs must accept dual enrollment credit for any course included in CHE’s Statewide Articulation Agreement list of Universally Transferable Courses. The list must be published on CHE’s website and all public college and university websites. Additionally, all IHLs participating in dual enrollment programs must enroll in the National Student Clearinghouse Reverse Transfer initiative. IHLs must agree to facilitate the reverse transfer of earned credits from partnering four-year institutions back to two-year colleges when applicable.

Additionally, the bill requires school districts, including charter school authorizers, and IHLs to enter into agreements prior to providing dual enrollment courses. All agreements must be subject to audit as defined in the statewide policy regarding dual enrollment referenced in Section 59-60-200. The bill also requires public school districts, including charter authorizers, to apply

the same weighting to all baccalaureate and Associate in Applied Science dual enrollment pathway courses as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses when calculating high school grade point averages. All dual enrollment programs must also offer certain student support services. For students with disabilities, an IHL offering dual enrollment courses must include in its agreement with the school district a description of the services and resources available to students with disabilities who enroll in dual enrollment courses.

Further, the bill requires each IHL to provide an annual report to the Office of Statewide Workforce Development, CHE, Tech Board, State Board of Education, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate. Beginning July 1, 2027, the Tech Board must conduct system-wide audits of each technical college on a three-year rotating basis to examine compliance with state dual enrollment policy. CHE must also conduct audits on a three-year rotating basis of public and private four-year colleges, University of South Carolina branch campuses, and universities to examine compliance with state dual enrollment policy. Summary reports must be provided to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, State Board of Education, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate by June 30 of each year. The State Board of Education may prohibit a school district from participating in dual enrollment programs with an IHL that fails to comply with the requirements of this bill.

Lastly, the bill specifies that dual enrollment program funding must provide tuition-free dual enrollment opportunities for all eligible high school students. School districts, including charter school authorizers, must develop a cost sharing model with IHLs that ensures costs are equitable across the state. Subject to annual appropriations by the General Assembly, IHLs must also use available scholarship funds for the standard tuition rate per credit hour for each dual enrollment course taken by a student during the summer term.

Commission on Higher Education. CHE indicates that this bill will increase expenses by approximately \$24,000 beginning in FY 2026-27 for salary and fringe benefits for 0.25 FTE (Program Manager I) to conduct audits of public and private four-year colleges and universities and the University of South Carolina 2-year branch campuses to examine compliance with state dual enrollment policy. CHE reports that it will request a General Fund appropriation increase for the expenses.

Education Oversight Committee. This bill will have no expenditure impact for EOC. EOC indicates that it can manage the provisions of the bill with existing appropriations.

S.C. Department of Education. This bill will have no expenditure impact on SCDE. SCDE reports that the department is currently preparing to staff a time-limited position to support secondary school counselors and career counselor specialists serving grades six through twelve. Therefore, while the bill establishes additional coordination, guidance, and oversight responsibilities related to dual enrollment policy alignment, reporting, and compliance, SCDE anticipates that these activities can be accomplished with existing staff and resources.

State Institutions of Higher Learning. The expenditure impact of the bill on IHLs will vary. CCU indicates that this bill will increase expenses by approximately \$70,000 beginning in FY 2026-27 for salary and fringe benefits for 1.0 FTE (dual enrollment coordinator) to ensure compliance with the provisions of the bill. CCU also notes that since the university does not currently award or process summer scholarship applications for dual enrollment students and does not have access to LTAP or SC WINS funds, expenses may increase by an unknown amount in order to satisfy the requirement that IHLs use available scholarship funds for dual enrollment courses taken by students during the summer term. CofC indicates that the overall expenditure impact of this bill is undetermined since it is uncertain how a cost-sharing model to provide tuition-free dual enrollment opportunities for all eligible high school students will work and how many students will enroll. CofC also indicates that outside of Section 59-60-210, it estimates an annual recurring cost of approximately \$152,000 beginning in FY 2026-27 for salary and fringe benefits for an academic advisor (1.0 FTE), additional staff for the Registrar's Office (0.5 FTE), clerical assessment (0.25 FTE), and admissions clerical work (0.5 FTE) to have adequate staff to comply with the requirements of the bill. CofC notes that this estimate does not include any non-recurring database or other set-up costs. FMU anticipates that while it may absorb certain duties within existing structures, this bill broadens the scope and amount of administrative processes, resulting in new responsibilities, increased recurring workloads, higher transaction volumes, and higher audit exposure across the dual enrollment lifecycle. FMU estimates that the bill will increase expenses by approximately \$127,000 in FY 2026-27. Of this amount, \$123,000 is for recurring expenses, including \$114,500 for salary and fringe benefits for 2.0 FTEs (Student Services Program Coordinator I, Student Services Program Coordinator II) to assist with compliance, data management, program coordination, and implementation. Other recurring operating expenses include \$3,500 for technology expenses, \$1,500 for travel, and \$3,500 for office and operational costs. The remaining \$4,000 is for non-recurring technology expenses. FMU will request a General Fund appropriation increase to cover the expenses. Lander indicates that all costs associated with this bill can be managed with existing appropriations. Winthrop indicates that this bill will increase expenses by approximately \$277,000 in FY 2026-27. Of this amount, \$227,000 is for recurring expenses, including \$172,000 for salary and fringe benefits for 2.0 FTEs (dual enrollment reporting coordinators) to be responsible for data integrity and reporting related to dual enrollment activity, \$35,000 for a reporting system, and \$20,000 for school counselor training stipends. The remaining \$50,000 is for non-recurring expenses, including \$30,000 to hire a contractor to develop the required dashboards and \$20,000 to set up a reporting system. Further, we anticipate that this bill may increase the number of students participating in dual enrollment programs since they will be able to participate at no cost. However, the potential increase in enrollment and subsequent expenses associated with this increase is unknown.

State Agency Schools. The expenditure impact of this bill on the State Agency Schools will vary. The Governor's School at John de law Howe indicates that the agency has a dual enrollment program that is currently satisfying the requirements of the bill. The Governor's School for Arts and Humanities indicates that this bill will have no expenditure impact, as the agency can manage the provisions of the bill with existing appropriations. The Governor's School for Science and Mathematics reports that it currently operates a dual enrollment model under which students do not pay tuition or fees for dual enrollment coursework. The agency

anticipates that any increase in costs due to the need for administrative alignment or new reporting policies will likely be minimal and can be managed with existing appropriations. The School for the Deaf and the Blind indicates that this bill may increase costs by an amount up to \$50,000 beginning in FY 2026-27 for additional resources such as sign language interpretation and transportation for students participating in a dual enrollment program. The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School reports that the agency has a GED program, and as such, does not offer credits that would affect a dual enrollment program.

State Revenue

This bill may decrease revenue by an undetermined amount for IHLs by requiring tuition-free dual enrollment opportunities for all eligible high school students and requiring school districts, including charter school authorizers, to develop a cost sharing model with IHLs. By requiring tuition-free enrollment, IHLs may lose revenue from tuition previously paid by dual enrollment students. The amount of the decrease in revenue will depend upon the number of enrolled students that would have paid tuition and the type of cost-sharing model developed. For reference, Winthrop University indicates that its projected dual enrollment revenue for FY 2026-27 is approximately \$162,000.

The Tech Board indicates that there are over 21,000 dual enrollment students in their system. There are multiple arrangements with different colleges and universities and among the different school districts. The colleges and universities receive funding from LTAP or the SC WINS and payments from the school districts. Additionally, some colleges and universities waive dual enrollment charges. However, after the LTAP and SC WINS funds are applied and payments from school districts are received, students are paying approximately \$8,000,000. Under the bill, these students will no longer be charged tuition, and the Tech Board estimates that total revenue for technical colleges will be reduced by approximately \$8,000,000 annually beginning in FY 2026-27.

Local Expenditure

This bill enacts the “South Carolina Dual Enrollment Opportunity Act”. The bill requires school districts, including charter school authorizers, and IHLs to enter into agreements prior to providing dual enrollment courses. All agreements must be subject to audit as defined in the statewide policy regarding dual enrollment referenced in Section 59-60-200. The bill further requires public school districts, including charter authorizers, to apply the same weighting to all baccalaureate and Associate in Applied Science dual enrollment pathway courses as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses when calculating high school grade point averages. Lastly, the bill specifies that dual enrollment program funding must provide tuition-free dual enrollment opportunities for all eligible high school students. School districts, including charter school authorizers, must develop a cost sharing model with IHLs that ensures costs are equitable across the state.

The expenditure impact of this bill on the local school districts will vary. SCDE surveyed the seventy-two regular school districts and three charter school districts and received responses from six districts. Five of the responding districts indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact. One responding district indicates that this bill will increase expenditures by

approximately \$307,000 to cover textbook and course fees at an average cost of \$600 for the 512 students currently enrolled in dual enrollment credit classes.

Local Revenue

N/A



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director