

SOUTH CAROLINA
SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

2026
ANNUAL
CONVENTION

FEB. 19-22, 2026 · EMBASSY SUITES MYRTLE BEACH

SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION A N N U A L CONVENTION

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend the South Carolina School Boards Association's Annual Convention! The largest training event of the year will bring together outstanding experts and practitioners in school board governance, communications and leadership.

#scsba2026ac

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GENERAL information

New Board Orientation

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

SCSBA's interactive learning experience for newly elected or appointed board members provides essential skill-building presentations and a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of school boards. Held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., the orientation is open to all newly elected school board members and features a proven and praised lineup of topics ranging from ethics and decision-making to financial oversight and basic regulations. Participants may comply with state law requiring new board members to complete training free of charge and may extend their stay to enjoy additional training during the Annual Convention. All other SCSBA members are welcome to attend for \$150 per person, which includes lunch.

Board Chair Workshop

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Gain practical skills to effectively lead and manage at SCSBA's annual leadership session specifically for experienced and new board chairs. Held from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., the workshop focuses on the specific roles, responsibilities and skills needed to address the demanding issues associated with the top job. It is open to superintendents and other interested board members as well. The registration fee, which includes lunch, is \$210 for SCSBA members only.

General sessions, trending topics, breakout sessions

From general session keynote speakers to trending topic and breakout sessions, this year's convention features information on community engagement, education innovation, making sound board decisions, school board governance and more.

Dress code

The dress code throughout the convention is casual. Dressing in layers is recommended, as some meeting rooms may be slightly cool.

Trade show

Take home a wealth of ideas and product information from more than 60 exhibitors, including architectural firms, food service providers, suppliers of instructional materials and more. The trade show hours are Friday, 7:30–11 a.m. and 12:15–3:30 p.m. and Saturday, 7:30–11:30 a.m. To find out who will be at the trade show, visit the Annual Convention web page: scsba.org/annual-convention.

Student performances

Various student performance groups will showcase their talents throughout the convention. Those scheduled to perform include Velvet Roar, Williamsburg County School District; Advanced Chamber Chorus, Anderson School District Five; Leopard Women's Chorus, Kershaw County School District; and Brown's Ferry Elementary Marching Band, Georgetown County School District.

Saturday evening reception

Join colleagues, convention speakers and SCSBA staff from 5–6:30 p.m. for a networking reception featuring hors d'oeuvres and entertainment.

NOTE: Each convention registration includes one reception admission. Registered attendees must wear their name badge for admittance to the reception. Wristbands for guests are available for \$45 each and must be reserved through your board secretary at the time of Annual Convention registration.

Registration

You must be a member of SCSBA to attend this event. The registration fee through Jan. 19 is \$350 per SCSBA member. The fee includes one admission for the Saturday evening reception. Registrations after the deadline will be charged an additional \$25.

To prevent duplicate registrations, invoicing and credit card charges, SCSBA's online conference registration process is as follows:

- School board members must register through their board secretary.

For more information, contact Ashleigh Hankwitz at ahankwitz@scsba.org or 803-988-0240.

GENERAL. information

Cancellations

Cancellations must be made in writing and emailed to Ashleigh Hankwitz by Jan. 19, 2026. The registration fee is nonrefundable but is transferable to anyone within the same district. Registrations after the deadline will be charged an additional \$25.

Boardmanship Institute credit

- New Board Orientation: 5 points, 5 hours
- Board Chair Workshop: 5 points, 5 hours
- Annual Convention: 10 points, 10 hours

Convention location and room rates

The Embassy Suites is located in Kingston Resorts at 9800 Queensway Blvd. in Myrtle Beach. A nightly room rate of \$175, single or double plus taxes and fees, is available through Jan. 19 or when the room block is full, whichever comes first.

Complimentary breakfast

Attendees staying in the Embassy Suites will receive a complimentary buffet breakfast beginning at 7 a.m. in the Embassy Suites' Coastal Grill and an evening Manager's Reception.

Attendees staying in the Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort will receive a daily breakfast voucher for Café Amalfi.

Be sure to check scsba.org regularly for the latest convention details, including speaker information and a list of exhibitors.



BE SURE TO CHECK SCSBA.ORG
and our social media pages regularly for the latest convention
details, including speaker information and a list of exhibitors.



twitter.com/scsba



facebook.com/scsba



instagram.com/thescsba

This day-long, interactive session

is open to all newly elected school board members and features information on the roles and responsibilities of school boards and board members. Attendance may require a room reservation for Wednesday night. There is no registration cost for newly elected or appointed board members. For all other SCSBA members, the fee is \$150, which includes lunch.

Thursday, Feb. 19

8-8:30 a.m.

Registration and beverage break *Windsor foyer*

○ CO-SPONSORED BY SSOE GROUP

8:30-9 a.m.

Welcome and About SCSBA *Windsor BC*

Scott T. Price, SCSBA Executive Director

Tim Rhodes, SCSBA President, Abbeville County School District

9-10 a.m.

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities *Windsor BC*

- Setting the vision
- Establishing the structure and environment
- Identifying accountability measures and monitoring progress
- Being an advocate for schools and students
- Fostering positive board and superintendent relationships
- Adhering to a code of ethics

Beth Branham, Esquire, *Former Board Member Lexington School District Two, SCSBA Past President*

10-10:15 a.m.

Beverage break *Windsor foyer*

○ CO-SPONSORED BY SSOE GROUP

10:15-11:15 a.m.

Avoiding the \$10,000 Fine: S.C. School Board Members Need to Know About the South Carolina Ethics Act *Windsor BC*

In this session, you will receive an overview of the Ethics Reform Act with an emphasis on the rules of conduct for new school board members.

Alex Sherard, Senior Associate, *White Story & Hicks, LLC*

11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

School Finance 101 *Windsor BC*

From the general fund to pupil activity and everything in between, board members will be provided general information on school district finance. Where does the funding come from and how do we get it?

Mellanie Jinnette, *Retired School District Chief Financial Officer*

12:15-1:30 p.m.

Lunch (included in registration) *Kensington G*

○ CO-SPONSORED BY WHITE STORY & HICKS, LLC

1:30-2:30 p.m.

Understanding the S.C. Freedom of Information Act *Windsor BC*

This session will review key provisions of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and provide guidance to new board members on how school boards operate to ensure compliance with FOIA.

Kathy Mahoney, Attorney, *Halligan Mahoney & Williams, PA*

Vernie Williams, Attorney, *Halligan Mahoney & Williams, PA*

2:30-2:45 p.m.

Beverage break *Windsor foyer*

○ CO-SPONSORED BY SSOE GROUP

2:45-3:45 p.m.

Stop, Collaborate and Listen: Robert's Rules of Order for New Board Members *Windsor BC*

This session offers a practical and engaging introduction to Robert's Rules of Order tailored specifically for new board members. Participants will learn how to navigate meetings with confidence by understanding the purpose behind parliamentary procedure.

Westley P. Cox, Esquire, *West Cox Law Firm LLC*

3:45-4 p.m.

Workshop closing and door prizes *Windsor BC*

Tim Rhodes, SCSBA President, Abbeville County School District

Learn about the chair's leadership role through skill-building sessions. Attendance may require a room reservation for Wednesday night. The registration fee for SCSBA members is \$210 and includes lunch. Registration is for SCSBA members only.

Thursday, Feb. 19

8–8:30 a.m.

Registration and beverage break Westminster hallway

○ CO-SPONSORED BY HALLIGAN MAHONEY & WILLIAMS, P.A.

8:30–9 a.m.

Welcome and purpose Kensington C

Janet Graham, SCSBA President-elect, Horry County Schools

9–10 a.m.

Board Leadership Kensington C

Join this panel of school board members from around the state as they discuss challenges and opportunities in their communities. Hear best practices related to communicating with stakeholders, managing constant change, adapting policies and budgets and working cooperatively with district administration.

10–10:15 a.m.

Beverage break Westminster hallway

○ CO-SPONSORED BY HALLIGAN MAHONEY & WILLIAMS, P.A.

10:15–11:15 a.m.

**Understanding the role of board members
in employment matters and investigations** Kensington C

This session will provide board chairs with an understanding of the due process rights of professional and classified employees, how administrative investigations of employment matters are conducted and what the board's role is when these matters come before the board.

Kathy Mahoney, Attorney, Halligan Mahoney & Williams, P.A.

Vernie Williams, Attorney, Halligan Mahoney & Williams, P.A.

11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Order in the Boardroom:

Robert's Rules of Order for Board Chairs Kensington C

Effective board leadership requires more than a gavel. It requires clarity, confidence and a firm grasp of meeting procedure. This session provides a practical, real-world guide to using Robert's Rules of Order to lead efficient, fair and productive meetings.

Westley P. Cox, Esquire, West Cox Law Firm, LLC

12:15–1:30 p.m.

Lunch (included in registration) Kensington G

○ CO-SPONSORED BY WHITE STORY & HICKS, LLC

1:30–2:45 p.m.

**Understanding the S.C. Freedom
of Information Act** Kensington C

This session will review the key provisions of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and provide guidance to school board members.

Ashley Story, Partner, White Story & Hicks, LLC

2:45–3 p.m.

Workshop closing and door prizes Kensington C

Janet Graham, SCSBA President-elect, Horry County School District

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Friday, Feb. 20

7:30–8:30 a.m.

Beverage break *Kensington DEF*
○ CO-SPONSORED BY HALLIGAN MAHONEY & WILLIAMS, P.A.

7:30–11 a.m.

Trade show *Kensington DEF and Cambridge Hall*

7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Registration *Windsor foyer*

8:30–10 a.m.

First general session *Kensington ABCG*

Welcome and Purpose

Tim Rhodes, SCSBA President, Abbeville County School District

Pledge of Allegiance

Introduction of SCSBA Board of Directors

Student performance

Velvet Roar, Williamsburg County School District

Introduction of keynote speaker

Tim Rhodes, SCSBA President, Abbeville County School District

Keynote address: The Moment of Impact:

Understanding Your Influence

Between navigating the cluttered social and political agendas, increased community involvement and heavy rates of attrition, it can be easy to lose sight of the powerful and positive influence of a healthy school board. Reconnect with how your work matters and the impact it has on the future, the family and the community. When all the noise tries to distract you from your purpose, this personal keynote reminds you how your often unsung efforts can change not only a student's life but the entire family.

Anne Marie Anderson, author, three-time Emmy Award winning broadcaster and keynote speaker

10–11 a.m.

Refreshment break *Kensington DEF*
○ CO-SPONSORED BY WHITE STORY & HICKS, LLC

11 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Second general session *Kensington ABCG*

Welcome and Introduction

Janet Graham, SCSBA President-elect, Horry County Schools

Greetings from the South Carolina Superintendent of Education

Ellen Weaver

Keynote address

Former Gov. David M. Beasley

12:15–1:30 p.m.

Lunch on your own

For your convenience, Coastal Grill and Black Drum will offer lunch. Coastal Grill is located to the left of hotel registration. Black Drum is located outside behind the pool deck.

12:15–3:30 p.m.

Trade show *Kensington DEF and Cambridge Hall*

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Breakout sessions *Eton, Kensington AB, Kensington C, Oxford, Winchester*
(Choose one of five)

2:30–3 p.m.

Refreshment break *Kensington DEF*
○ CO-SPONSORED BY CRAIG GAULDEN DAVIS | PBK

3–4 p.m.

Breakout sessions *Eton, Kensington AB, Kensington C, Oxford, Winchester*
(Choose one of five)

Saturday, Feb. 21

7:30–8:30 a.m.

Beverage break *Kensington DEF*
○ CO-SPONSORED BY BOYKIN & DAVIS, LLC

7:30–11:30 a.m.

Trade show *Kensington DEF*

7:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

Registration *Windsor foyer*

8:30–10:30 a.m.

Third general session *Kensington ABCG*
○ CO-SPONSORED BY DUFF FREEMAN SEIBERT, LLC

Welcome and Introduction

Janet Graham, SCSBA President-elect, Horry County Schools

Recognition of SCSBA Past Presidents

Recognition of SCSBA President's Club Members

Student performance

Advanced Chamber Chorus, Anderson School District Five

Keynote address: Unlocking Dreams by Cultivating Hope through Education

Elizabeth "Liz" Huntley, J.D., is an attorney by trade and a child advocate by triumph. Her story has inspired audiences around the world as she continues to bring hope through education. She knows firsthand the life-changing power of goodness found in education. She will share how her journey now inspires schools across the country to pursue the same goodness that changed her life and unlocked her dreams.

Liz Huntley, attorney, speaker, author and advocate

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10:30–11:30 a.m.

Refreshment break *Kensington DEF*

Door prize winners posted *Kensington DEF*

11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Breakout sessions *Eton, Kensington AB, Kensington C, Oxford, Winchester*
(Choose one of five)

12:30–1:45 p.m.

Lunch on your own

For your convenience, Coastal Grill and Black Drum will offer lunch. Coastal Grill is to the left of hotel registration. Black Drum is outside behind the pool deck.

2–3 p.m.

Breakout sessions *Eton, Kensington AB, Kensington C, Winchester*
(Choose one of four)

3:15–4:15 p.m.

S.C. Caucus of Black School Board Members meeting *Kensington AB*
(Open to all convention participants)

5–6:30 p.m.

Saturday Evening Reception *Kensington DEF*

○ CO-SPONSORED BY BURR & FOREMAN, LLP

Sunday, Feb. 22

7:30–8:30 a.m.

Beverage break *Balmoral Hall*

○ CO-SPONSORED BY ALLSPRING GLOBAL INVESTMENTS AND WELLS FARGO

8:30–11:30 a.m.

Closing general session *Kensington ABCG*

Scott Childers, SCSBA Secretary/Treasurer, York School District 1

Student performance

Leopard Women's Chorus, Kershaw County School District

Recognition of SCSBA Boardmanship Institute Level 6 Recipients

Greetings from the 2026 SCASA

Superintendent of the Year

Dr. Shawn Foster, Superintendent, Orangeburg County School District

Greetings from the 2026 South Carolina

Teacher of the Year

Corey Bedenbaugh, Social Studies Teacher, Batesburg-Leesville Middle School, Lexington Three (Video)

Student performance

Brown's Ferry Elementary Marching Band, Georgetown County School District

Keynote address: If You Can't Say Something Nice, What DO You Say? Practical Solutions for Working Together Better

This upbeat presentation inspired by Sarita Maybin's first book provides practical approaches and positive phrases for delivering difficult messages with tact and respect. You will learn strategies for staying positive and working together, even during uncertainty and challenging circumstances.

Presentation highlights include:

- Determine whether to confront a situation or let it go
- Proven process for constructively conveying concerns
- Three Ps for staying positive in challenging situations
- Sarita's Top 10 Positive Communication Phrases
Sarita Maybin, international speaker, communication expert and author

Convention closing remarks and door prizes

Tim Rhodes, SCSBA President, Abbeville County School District

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

April 22, 2026

Day at the Capitol, *Columbia, S.C.*

Oct. 8, 2026

Beyond the Basics, *Columbia, S.C.*

June 4, 2026

New Board Orientation, Make-up, *Columbia, S.C.*

Oct. 14–16, 2026

Risky Business, *Hilton Head, S.C.*

Aug. 29–30, 2026

School Law Conference, *Greenville, S.C.*

Dec. 5–6, 2026

Legislative Advocacy & Delegate Assembly, *Charleston, S.C.*

FEATURED speakers

Anne Marie Anderson

Author, three-time Emmy Award winning broadcaster and keynote speaker

Anne Marie Anderson is a three-time Emmy Award winning broadcaster, keynote speaker and author. As she walked through ESPN's doors fresh out of college, Anne Marie embarked on a career that led her into the boardrooms and locker rooms of some of the most successful franchises in sport.

Utilizing the methods observed through behind-the-scenes access to high-performing coaches, athletes and executives, Anderson applied their penchant for taking bold and sometimes surprising risks to her own personal and professional life. The knowledge and experience she gained through making one unexpected career move after another led her to become one of the most experienced female play-by-play announcers in the country.

In "Cultivating Audacity," Anne Marie shares the system she developed to find the courage to confront hesitation and break down barriers that stood between her and the life she wanted. Anne Marie is known for delivering keynotes that are alternately funny and touching. She seeks to connect with audiences through the power of storytelling.

Former Gov. David M. Beasley

International Humanitarian, Peacemaker, Reformer

David Beasley is a distinguished leader, humanitarian and former governor of South Carolina (1995–1999). He most recently served as the executive director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) from 2017 to April 2023, having been nominated by two U.S. presidential administrations from different parties and appointed by the UN secretary-general.

Under Beasley's leadership, WFP became the largest humanitarian organization in the world, assisting more than 160 million people in 2022 alone and raising more than \$55 billion to combat global hunger. In 2020, he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of WFP for his efforts to provide food assistance in conflict areas and prevent food from being used as a weapon of war.

In his Oslo acceptance speech on Dec. 10, 2021, he remarked:

"We have learned that there is great richness in those who are seen, in the eyes of the world, as 'the poor.' And many of us who are considered 'rich' are actually poor in the things that matter most."



Anderson

Elizabeth "Liz" Huntley

Attorney, speaker, author and advocate

Elizabeth "Liz" Huntley is an accomplished litigation attorney, dedicated child advocate, author and lecturer. Liz is the president and cofounder of the Hope Institute, an organization in Alabama that helps schools build a culture of character for students. She practices law at Lightfoot, Franklin & White LLC in Birmingham, Alabama.

Liz serves on multiple civic boards, commissions and task forces throughout Alabama and the country. She regularly speaks to groups across the U.S., often referencing her journey as described in her memoir, "More Than A Bird."

Liz earned her law degree from the University of Alabama School of Law, where she serves on the Law School Foundation Board of Governors. She received her undergraduate degree from Auburn University, where she is a member of the Auburn University Board of Trustees. Liz and her husband, Tony, live in Alabama and have three children.



Huntley

Sarita Maybin

International speaker, communication expert and author

Sarita Maybin is a dynamic and seasoned speaker known for empowering audiences to transform uncomfortable conversations into constructive communication. With a career spanning more than two decades as an international speaker and communication expert, Sarita has shared her insights in all 50 states, 10 countries including Iceland and on the TEDx stage.

Sarita blends real stories, practical solutions and a relatable presence that engages audiences and inspires positive action. Her universal message has resonated with a diverse range of clients, including the American Dental Association, Million Dollar Round Table, National Conference of State Legislatures, Department of the Navy, the University of California and seven other state school board associations.

Leveraging her background as a former university dean of students with a master's degree in counseling, Sarita shares strategies for enhanced collaboration and communication. She has also written the book answering the question: "If You Can't Say Something Nice, What DO You Say?" Her latest book, "Say What You Mean in a Nice Way," continues her mission to foster positive dialogue.



Maybin

FEATURED speakers

Ellen Weaver

S.C. Superintendent of Education

Born and raised in South Carolina, Ellen knows firsthand the sacrifices families make to give their children a brighter future.

Her own path—reading with her mom and great-grandmother, working alongside her dad on the construction site, graduating from an outstanding public school, and working for U.S. Senator Jim DeMint—taught her the power of faith, integrity, hard work, and standing firm for what you believe.

In 2013, Ellen founded Palmetto Promise Institute, to champion common sense, conservative solutions that expand opportunity for her fellow South Carolinians. She also served as the first female chair of the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee.

Today as State Superintendent of Education, she has turned vision into action: implementing evidence-based reading instruction grounded in phonics, leading the charge for phone-free classrooms, investing in safe schools and buses, and partnering with parents to restore trust and transparency in education.

Ellen's guiding belief is simple: hope is not passive. It's an action plan. With a listening ear, a strong backbone, and a laser focus on excellence, she works each day to ensure every child graduates ready for college, career, or military service. When education rises, South Carolina rises.

Dr. Shawn D. Foster

Superintendent, Orangeburg County School District (2026 SCASA Superintendent of the Year)

Dr. Shawn D. Foster is a distinguished educational leader and author of the inspirational leadership memoir "Knee Deep: Dying to Lead." With more than two decades of experience in school and district transformation, Dr. Foster serves as superintendent of Orangeburg County School District (OCSD), where he is committed to advancing academic excellence, equity and innovation.

Under Dr. Foster's leadership, OCSD has undergone significant transformation in instructional practices and student opportunities. He has championed initiatives to improve educational outcomes, ensuring that all students receive a rigorous and high-quality learning experience.



Weaver

Notably, he led efforts to secure a \$190 million bond referendum, supplemented by an additional \$40 million investment and a 90-acre land donation to support new schools and modernized facilities. This visionary leadership has positioned OCSD as a member of the national League of Innovative Schools.

Dr. Foster influences statewide and national policy through service on the Executive Committee of the South Carolina Superintendents' Roundtable, the South Carolina High School League Executive Committee and the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching Advisory Board.

He is also a Riley Institute Diversity Fellow and a Racial Equity Leadership Network Fellow through the Southern Education Foundation. His work extends to healthcare partnership development as a member of the Advisory Board for MUSC Hospital Orangeburg.

Dr. Foster has received numerous honors, including recognition as the 2025 3A/2A/1A Superintendent of the Year by the South Carolina Athletic Administrators Association and 2026 South Carolina State Superintendent of the Year by the South Carolina Association of School Administrators.

Corey Bedenbaugh

Social Studies Teacher, Batesburg-Leesville Middle School, Lexington Three (2026 South Carolina Teacher of the Year)

Corey Bedenbaugh, an eighth grade social studies teacher at Batesburg-Leesville Middle School, is a dedicated educator who believes great teachers do more than teach — they inspire.

Bedenbaugh, an 11-year teaching veteran, now serves as a statewide ambassador for the teaching profession, inspiring future educators and mentoring teachers across the state. Having taught at both Batesburg-Leesville Middle School in Lexington School District Three and Pelion Middle School, Bedenbaugh has demonstrated consistent commitment to shaping young minds.

He founded Bow Ties with Bedenbaugh, a mentorship club for young men, and he coaches the JV girls basketball team, promoting teamwork and resilience among student-athletes.



Bedenbaugh



Foster

STUDENT performers



FRIDAY STUDENT GROUP

Williamsburg County School District: The Velvet Roar

A vibrant ensemble of young voices, full of passion and purpose, ready to move the world with their voices of distinction. Offering a powerful, soul-stirring experience to every heart their sound touches.



SUNDAY STUDENT GROUP

Georgetown County School District:

Brown's Ferry Elementary Marching Band

Under the leadership of Principal Ms. Tawanna N. Grant and Band Directors Thomas Scott and Crystal Ross, this talented group of young musicians showcases the power of creativity, discipline and teamwork. The Bengals perform at school events, parades and community celebrations and inspire peers across the district to explore the performing arts.



SATURDAY STUDENT GROUP

Anderson School District Five: The Advanced Chamber Chorus

This is the Advanced Chamber Chorus from Southwood Academy of the Arts in Anderson School District Five. Students in this ensemble are enrolled at TL Hanna High School, Westside High School or the Anderson Five Charter School and are in grades nine through twelve.



SUNDAY STUDENT GROUP

Kershaw County School District: The Leopard Women's Chorus

The Leopard Women's Chorus is the advanced treble ensemble made up of eighth grade singers who have been members of the Lugoff-Elgin Middle School Chorus program since sixth grade. These young women have spent three years growing together as musicians, performers and leaders within the choir family.

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III Research Drive . Columbia, SC 29203

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EMBASSY SUITES
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