

SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION SCHOOL LAW CONFERENCE



AUG. 29-30, 2026 • GREENVILLE, S.C.

AGENDA

Friday, August 28

3:30 – 6:30 p.m. **Registration**..... Atrium

Saturday, August 29

8:00 - 8:30 a.m. **Registration and breakfast break** Foyer
Co-sponsored by Halligan Mahoney & Williams, P.A.

8:30 - 9:45 a.m. **First general session** Regency ballrooms C-H

Welcome and purpose

Tim Rhodes, *SCSBA President, Abbeville County School District*

Federal Rights, State Responsibility, Local Decision-Making

Federal courts and agencies continue to redefine the legal and regulatory rules affecting public schools. In its 2025 Term, the Supreme Court addressed parental rights and the participation of transgender students in school athletics — cases that already have begun to influence local governance, policy development, and district operations. We'll explore how courts are interpreting and applying these evolving standards, where important legal questions remain unresolved, and what the decisions mean for school boards navigating complex and often contentious issues. Looking ahead, we'll preview the issues most likely to reach the Supreme Court next Term and identify the legal and policy developments school leaders should be watching in the year ahead.

Sonja Trainor, *Executive Director, National School Attorneys Association*

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- 9:45 - 10:45 a.m. **Special Education 2026: Did anything new happen this year???**
 *Regency ballrooms C-H*
 Key changes at the federal and state level and how these changes affect what happens at the local level.
Barbara A. Drayton, Esquire, Deputy General Counsel, South Carolina Department of Education
- 10:45 – 11:00 a.m. **Beverage break**.....*Foyer*
 Co-sponsored by **Boykin & Davis, LLC**
- 11:00 a.m. – 12 p.m. **Second general session**.....*Regency ballroom C-H*
- Avoiding the \$10,000 fine: What you need to know about South Carolina Ethics**
 In this session, you will get an overview of the Ethics Reform Act with an emphasis on the rules of conduct for school board members.
Meghan W. Dayson, Esquire, Executive Director, S.C. State Ethics Commission
- Noon - 1:30 p.m. **Lunch** (included in registration) *Regency ballroom A-B*
 Co-sponsored by **Duff Freeman Seibert, LLC**
- 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. **Breakout sessions** (choose one of three)
- ❖ **Understanding the role of Board Members in employment matters**
 *Regency ballroom C*
 This session will provide board members with a general understanding of the due process rights of employees and how administrators investigate employee misconduct, and will then clarify the role of a board member once an employment matter gets to the board.
Kathy Mahoney, Esquire, Partner, Halligan Mahoney & Williams, P.A.
Vernie Williams, Esquire, Partner, Halligan Mahoney & Williams, P.A.

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❖ **What's a Board to Do?: Navigating School Safety, Administrative Compliance, and Board Governance** *Regency ballrooms D-E*

School boards today face an increasingly complex landscape where student safety, legal compliance, and effective governance intersect. When a crisis hits, or a new mandate drops, where does the board's duty begin and end? This presentation unpacks the critical responsibilities of the board in establishing robust safety policies that adhere to administrative regulations and maintain clear boundaries of governance. Attendees will examine real-world scenarios to understand how to mitigate liability, foster collaboration, and implement proactive oversight without straining daily operations.

Renique K. Brabham, Esquire, Duff Freeman Seibert, LLC

❖ **Parliamentary Procedure: How Well Do You Know the Rules?**

..... *Regency ballrooms F-H*
Understanding the rules that govern board meetings is an essential responsibility of every school board member. This interactive session will equip participants with a working knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirements to support effective and legally compliant meeting management. Board members will learn how to conduct orderly meetings, properly manage motions and discussion, and understand the legal responsibilities associated with open meetings and executive sessions.

Dr. Tiffany N. Richardson, Esquire, General Counsel, Richland One

2:30 - 2:45 p.m.

Beverage break *Foyer*
Co-sponsored by White Story & Hicks, LLC

2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

Breakout sessions (*choose one of three*)

❖ **The ABCs of Title IX Investigations** *Regency ballroom C*

This presentation provides an overview of how educational institutions respond to reports of student misconduct, harassment, discrimination, and other concerns that impact the learning environment. With a focus on Title IX and student conduct processes, participants will explore how allegations are received and evaluated, the principles of fairness and impartiality that guide investigations, and how institutions reach and communicate decisions. The session will also address effective communication with students, families, and campus stakeholders, while highlighting best practices for promoting safety, accountability, and student success throughout the process.

Joseph Bias, Esquire, Founder, The Joseph Bias Law Firm

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❖ **The Non-Negotiables in Superintendent Contracts and Evaluations**

..... *Regency ballrooms D-E*

This interactive session will identify the non-negotiables in Superintendent contracts and evaluations for school boards. The discussion will assist board members in understanding the high-risk contractual provisions that require careful negotiation and the objective and subjective approach to conducting the Superintendent's evaluation to help better focus on the vital relationship between the Board and Superintendent. Board members will be equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to conduct meaningful, fair, and effective superintendent evaluations that support strategic goals and align with the contract.

Charles Boykin, *Esquire, Senior Partner, Boykin & Davis, LLC*

Tierney Goodwyn, *Esquire, Partner, Boykin & Davis, LLC*

❖ **Prompt, Peril, and Public Office: Legal Realities of AI Use for School Board Members**

Regency ballrooms F-H

Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming part of everyday governance, including how school board members review information, draft communications, summarize records, and prepare for meetings. While AI tools can improve efficiency and accessibility, they also create significant legal and practical risks involving FOIA, confidentiality, attorney-client privilege, student and personnel privacy, public records retention, bias, accuracy, and decision-making transparency. This session will provide school board members with a practical, legally grounded discussion of the advantages and pitfalls of using AI in their official capacities, including real-world examples and emerging governance concerns unique to public education.

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

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

S.C. Caucus of Black School Board Members meeting

..... *Regency ballrooms F-H*

(This meeting is open to all participants.)

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Sunday, August 30

7:30 - 8 a.m. **Registration and breakfast break** *Foyer*
Co-sponsored by White Story & Hicks, LLC

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. **Third general session** *Regency ballrooms C-H*

Opening remarks

Tim Rhodes, *SCSBA President, Abbeville County School District*

AI is Already in Your Schools. Now What?

This session provides an accessible but substantive introduction to artificial intelligence: what it is, how it works, and what it's already doing inside K–12 schools. We'll explore AI's impact on education from multiple angles: the opportunities it creates, the risks it introduces, and the questions board members should be asking their superintendent. The session also addresses the legal risks districts can't afford to overlook and what sound AI policy looks like. Come ready to leave with clarity, not just concern.

Mark Henderson, *Director of AI Strategy & Services, Missouri School Boards' Association*

9:00 - 9:15 a.m. **Beverage break** *Foyer*

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. **Closing general session** *Regency ballrooms C-H*

From Click to Crisis: Cybersecurity, Incident Response, and School Law. What School Leaders Need to Know Before, During, and After a Cyber Event..... *Regency ballrooms C-H*

A cyberattack may begin with one click, but its impact can quickly reach the classroom, central office, boardroom, and community. Effective response requires more than restoring a network—it demands coordination among district leadership, state law enforcement, cyber investigators, insurance professionals, breach and coverage counsel, and local general counsel. This session will show how those partners work together to contain the threat, preserve evidence, protect students and employees, meet legal and insurance obligations, communicate responsibly, and restore district operations. Board members will leave with a sharper understanding of the questions to ask before a crisis and the

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decisions that matter when one arrives.

Lyde Graham, CPM, SCSBIT Director of Insurance Services

Celeste T. Jones, Esquire, Partner, Burr & Forman, LLP

Kathy Mahoney, Esquire, Partner, Halligan Mahoney & Williams, P.A.

Ashley Story, Esquire, Partner, White, Story & Hicks, LLC

Ryan Truskey, CISO SC State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and Director of SC Critical Infrastructure for Cybersecurity

10:15 - 11:15 a.m.

2026 K-12 Legislation: What School Boards Need to Know

..... *Regency ballrooms C-H*
Join us as we break down the key K-12 education laws passed during the 2026 South Carolina legislative session, focusing on what school boards must do now to ensure their district policies remain compliant. We'll cover new mandates requiring policy adoption or revision, spotlight legislation of note, and share what didn't pass but could shape the 2027 agenda. Whether you're a school board member, superintendent, or policy leader, get the insights and tools you need to stay ahead of the curve.

Debbie Elmore, SCSBA Director of Governmental Relations

Rasheeda Cleveland, Esquire, SCSBA Director of Policy and Legal Services

11:30 a.m.

Closing remarks

Tim Rhodes, SCSBA President, Abbeville County School District