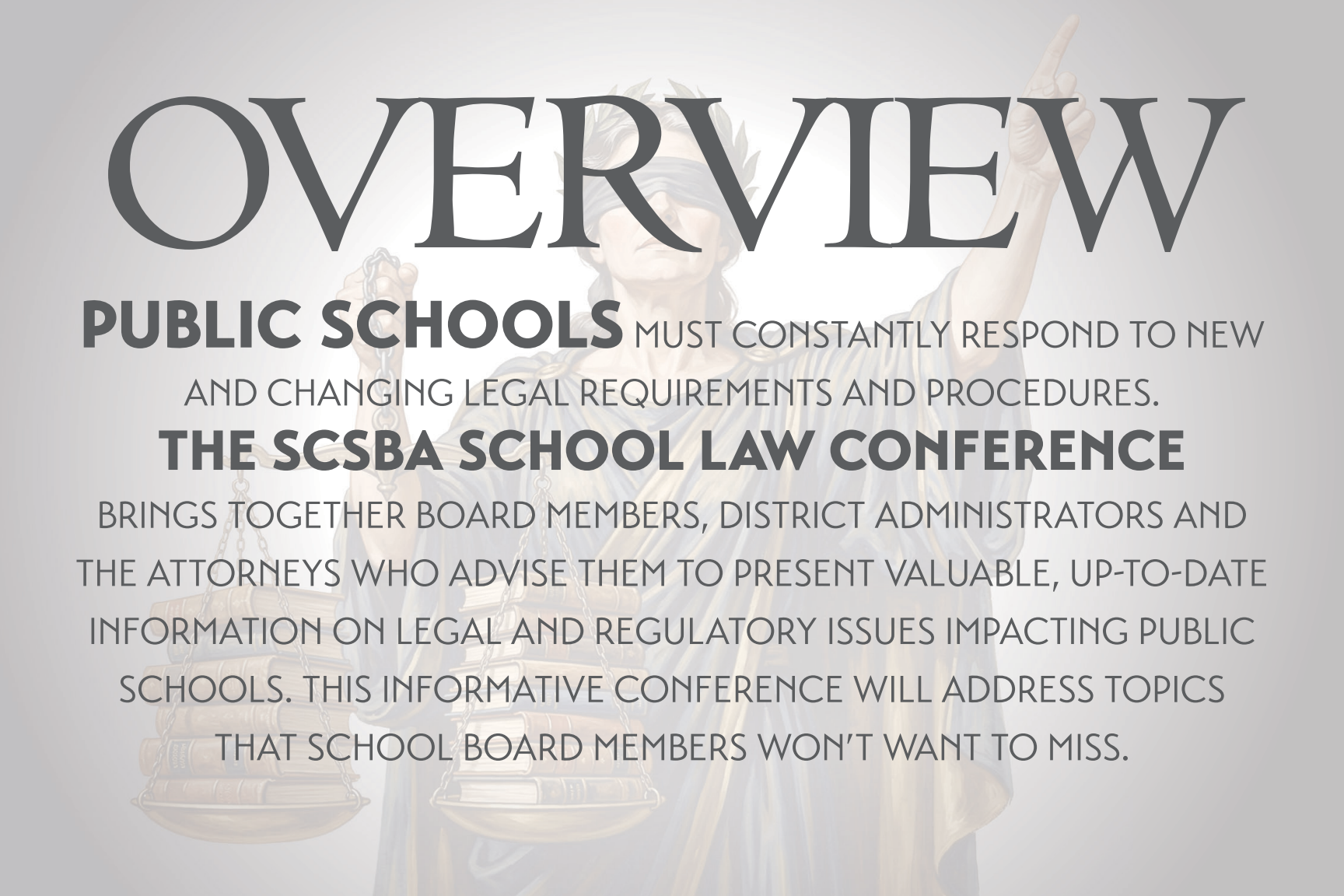


SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

SCHOOL LAW CONFERENCE



AUG. 29-30, 2026 • GREENVILLE, S.C.

A faint, artistic background image of Lady Justice, the personification of the law. She is depicted as a woman with long, wavy hair, blindfolded with a cloth, and holding a pair of golden scales of justice in her left hand and a sword in her right hand. The image is rendered in a classical, painterly style with soft lighting.

OVERVIEW

PUBLIC SCHOOLS MUST CONSTANTLY RESPOND TO NEW AND CHANGING LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES.

THE SCSBA SCHOOL LAW CONFERENCE

BRINGS TOGETHER BOARD MEMBERS, DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS AND THE ATTORNEYS WHO ADVISE THEM TO PRESENT VALUABLE, UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON LEGAL AND REGULATORY ISSUES IMPACTING PUBLIC SCHOOLS. THIS INFORMATIVE CONFERENCE WILL ADDRESS TOPICS THAT SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS WON'T WANT TO MISS.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase understanding of federal and state laws governing school boards and districts.
- Present recent legal changes affecting school boards and districts.
- Clarify the legal roles and responsibilities of board members on specialized topics.

SCSBA will apply for Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit for attorneys in attendance.

Boardmanship Institute: 5 points | 6 hours

REGISTRATION

The registration fee, which includes lunch on Saturday, is \$325 per person. The deadline for cancellations is August 6, 2026. Registration after the cancellation deadline increases to \$350. The conference registration fee is non-refundable but is transferrable to anyone in the attendee's district or organization. The meeting is open to members only.

Registrations by individual members are no longer accepted to help prevent duplicate registrations, invoicing, and credit card charges. School board members and district administrators must register through their board secretary, and associate members must register through their SCSBA company contact.

For more information or assistance, contact Ashleigh Hankwitz at ahankwitz@scsba.org or 803.988.0240.

HOTEL

The Hyatt Regency is located at 220 North Main Street in Greenville. A nightly room rate of \$169 for single/double occupancy, plus tax and fees, is available through August 6, 2026, or until the room block is full, whichever comes first. A one night's guarantee is required and may be refundable only if the reservation is canceled by August 6, 2026.

DRESS CODE

The dress code throughout the conference is casual. Dressing in layers is recommended, as temperatures may vary in the meeting rooms.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pee Dee REGIONAL MEETING

Wednesday, September 16, 5-7 p.m.
(registration deadline September 9)
The Poyner School of Healthcare Innovation
301 S. Dargan Street, Florence, S.C.

Lowcountry REGIONAL MEETING

Thursday, September 17, 5-7 p.m.
(registration deadline September 10)
Woodland High School
4128 Highway 78, Dorchester, S.C.

Upstate REGIONAL MEETING

Wednesday, October 7, 5-7 p.m.
(registration deadline September 30)
Hillcrest High School
3665 S. Industrial Dr., Simpsonville, S.C.

Beyond the Basics Workshop

October 8, 2026
SCSBA Training Center, Columbia, S.C.

Risky Business Seminar

SCSBIT's Workers' Compensation and Property & Casualty Insurance Trust Seminar
October 14-16, 2026
Sonesta Resort, Hilton Head, S.C.

Midlands REGIONAL MEETING

Wednesday, October 21, 5-7 p.m.
(registration deadline October 14)
Lexington Two Innovation Center
509 Bulldog Boulevard, Cayce, S.C.

Greater Savannah REGIONAL MEETING

Thursday, October 22, 5-7 p.m.
(registration deadline October 15)
J.D. Lever Elementary School
2404 Columbia Highway, Aiken, S.C.

Legislative Advocacy Conference

& Delegate Assembly
December 5-6, 2026
Charleston Marriott, Charleston, S.C.

Annual Convention, New Board Orientation, Board Chair Workshop

February 18-21, 2027
Kingston Resorts, Myrtle Beach, S.C.

AGENDA

FRIDAY, AUG. 28

3:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Registration..... Atrium

SATURDAY, AUG. 29

8 – 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 sessionRegency 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. Attention will also turn to significant federal agency actions affecting

schools, including delays in implementing the Department of Justice's website accessibility requirements and proposed changes to federal grant administration procedures. 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*

9:45 – 10:45 a.m.

Special Education 2026:

Did anything new happen this year???

Learn the 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 a.m.

Beverage break Foyer

● Co-sponsored by Boykin & Davis, LLC

11 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Second general sessionRegency ballrooms 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

● Co-sponsored by Duff Freeman Seibert, LLC

Seating is available in the Crepe Myrtle ballroom, if needed.

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Breakout sessions (choose one of three)

Understanding the role of Board Members

in employment mattersRegency 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.

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, Attorney, 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 InvestigationsRegency 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, Founder, The Joseph Bias Law Firm

The Non-Negotiables in Superintendent

Contracts and EvaluationsRegency 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. This session is designed to provide board members with practical legal guidance, governance best practices, and risk-management tools necessary for effective oversight that support stability and accountability.

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 MembersRegency 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. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of where AI can be helpful, where caution is required, and how boards can begin developing guardrails and best practices before problems arise.

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

4 – 5 p.m.
S.C. Caucus of Black School Board Members meeting..... Regency ballrooms F-H
This meeting is open to all participants.

SUNDAY, AUG. 30

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

8 – 9 a.m.
First general sessionRegency 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 - 9:15 a.m.
Beverage break Foyer

9:15 – 10:15 a.m.
Closing general sessionRegency 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
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 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),
Director of SC Critical Infrastructure for Cybersecurity**

10:15 - 11:15 a.m.

2026 K-12 Legislation:

What School Boards Need to KnowRegency 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



[x.com
/scsba](https://x.com/scsba)



[facebook.com
/scsba](https://facebook.com/scsba)



[podcasters.spotify.com
/pod/show/scsba](https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/scsba)



[instagram.com
/thescsba](https://instagram.com/thescsba)

scsba.org





NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLUMBIA, SC
PERMIT NO. 1270

SOUTH CAROLINA
SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

SCHOOL LAW

C O N F E R E N C E

AUG. 29-30, 2026

HYATT REGENCY GREENVILLE
GREENVILLE, SC

SCSBA • 111 RESEARCH DRIVE • COLUMBIA, SC 29203