South Carolina School Boards Association

Legislative Advocacy Conference

Dec. 4-6, 2026 • Charleston Marriott

Agenda

Friday, December 4

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

5:30 – 7 p.m. **SC Caucus of Black School Board Members Meeting** ..... Opal room
This meeting is open to all participants.

Saturday, December 5

7:30 – 8:30 a.m. **Registration and breakfast break**.....Crystal foyer
Co-Sponsored by ***Duff Freeman Seibert, LLC***

8:30 – 10 a.m. **First general session**.....Crystal ballroom

Welcome and Purpose
Scott T. Price, *SCSBA Executive Director*
Tim Rhodes, *SCSBA President, Abbeville County School District*

Legislative Roundtable: K-12 and Other State Policy Issues
Join members of the South Carolina General Assembly for a roundtable discussion on the issues expected to shape the 2027 legislative session, including K-12 public education. Legislators from the Senate and House will share their perspectives on emerging priorities, key policy debates, and other issues affecting public schools. Explore how school board members can engage with lawmakers and effectively communicate their districts' needs and priorities throughout the legislative process.
The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, *member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senate Family and Veteran's Services Committee, Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children, and Senate Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence*
The Honorable Michael Johnson, *member of the Senate Education Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee*

The Honorable Neal Collins, *member of the House Ways and Means Committee and its Public Education Subcommittee; chairman of the Property Tax Ways and Means Subcommittee; and a member of the S.C. Education Oversight Committee*
The Honorable Heath Sessions, *member House Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs Committee and Chairman of its Medical and Health Affairs Subcommittee*
Moderator: Scott T. Price, *SCSBA Executive Director*

10 – 10:15 a.m. **Beverage break**.....Crystal foyer
Co-Sponsored by ***Halligan Mahoney & Williams, P.A.***

10:15 – 11:15 a.m. **Second general session**.....Crystal ballroom

What's on the Education Legislative Agenda for 2027?
What are South Carolina's education organizations prioritizing for the 2027 legislative session? In this roundtable discussion, representatives from statewide education organizations will share their legislative priorities, key issues, and policy proposals affecting teachers, school administrators, and students. Hear different perspectives on the issues these organizations plan to bring before the General Assembly and the discussions expected to shape education policy in the year ahead.
Ryan Bailey, *Director of Membership and Communications, S.C. Association of School Administrators (SCASA)*
Dena R. Crews, *President, S.C. Education Association (SCEA)*
Rebecca Blackburn Hines, *Director of Policy and Government Affairs, S.C. Department of Education (SCDE)*
Patrick Kelly, *Director of Governmental Affairs, Palmetto State Teachers Association (PSTA)*
Moderator: Debbie Elmore, *SCSBA Director of Governmental Relations*

11:15 – 11:30 a.m. **Beverage break**.....Crystal foyer
Co-Sponsored by ***Boykin & Davis, LLC***

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11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Third general session** .....Crystal ballroom

Taxes, Growth and the Future of South Carolina
What do tax reform and South Carolina's rapid growth mean for the future of our public schools? Join Sen. Sean Bennett for an inside look at two Senate study committees he chairs: the Common-Sense Tax Reform Committee and the Committee to Study South Carolina's Growth. From funding and local resources to enrollment pressures and infrastructure needs, these conversations have important implications for school districts. Hear what's being studied, what questions are emerging, and what school board members should be watching as the discussions move forward.
The Honorable Sean Bennett, *member of Senate Finance Committee and Chairman K -12 Finance Subcommittee*

12:30 – 1:30 p.m. **Lunch** *(Included in registration)*.....Emerald ballroom
Co-sponsored by ***White Story & Hicks, LLC***

2 – 5 p.m. **Delegate Assembly** .....Crystal ballroom
(Delegates are asked to sign in at 1:45 p.m.)
Representatives of the school boards governing South Carolina's districts will convene for the association's annual business meeting to elect officers and adopt the association's 2027 legislative resolutions.

5 p.m. **SCSBA Board of Directors meeting**.....Emerald salon one
This meeting follows the annual business meeting and is open to all participants.

Sunday, December 6

7:30 – 8:30 a.m. **Registration and breakfast break**.....Crystal foyer
Co-Sponsored by ***Pierce Group Benefits***

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8:30 – 9 a.m. **Closing general session** .....Crystal ballroom

Welcome
Scott T. Price, *SCSBA Executive Director*

Address by 2027 SCSBA President
Janet Graham, *SCSBA President, Horry County Schools*

9 - 10 a.m. **Inside the Beltway: Federal K-12 Update**
Now that the elections are over, what changes are on the horizon and what could it mean for South Carolina's public schools? Join Washington, D.C., education policy expert Peter Oppenheim for an insider's look at the federal issues and developments shaping K-12 education. From congressional action and federal funding to policy changes and emerging priorities, Oppenheim will break down what's happening, what's on the horizon, and what school board members need to know.
Peter Oppenheim, *Principal, Todd Strategy Group, Washington, D.C.*
Moderator: Janet Graham, *SCSBA President, Horry County Schools*

10 - 11 a.m. **Different Sides, Common Ground: A Conversation on Civility, Respect and Getting Things Done**
Who says you must agree to work together? Two members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are showing that differences in politics, perspectives, and backgrounds don't have to stand in the way of mutual respect and meaningful collaboration. Join them for a candid, engaging conversation about finding common ground, building relationships across divides, and keeping the focus on what matters most: making life better for South Carolinians. With lessons that extend well beyond the State House, this session offers school board members a fresh perspective on leading with civility, navigating disagreements, and working together for the communities they serve.
The Honorable Justin Bamberg, *S.C. House of Representatives, District 90 (Bamberg, Colleton, Dorchester & Orangeburg Counties)*
The Honorable Neal Collins, *S.C. House of Representatives,* District 5 (*Greenville and Pickens Counties)*

11 a.m. **Closing remarks**
Janet Graham, *SCSBA President, Horry County Schools*