**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**H. 4163**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. Erickson, Bowers, Bradley, Crawford, Davis, Pedalino, Hartnett, Neese, M.M. Smith, Oremus, Lawson, Vaughan, Herbkersman, B.J. Cox, Collins, B.L. Cox, Forrest, Brewer, McGinnis, Burns, Gatch, Haddon, Hager, Hixon, Murphy, Taylor, Whitmire, Willis, Teeple and Guest

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Introduced in the House on March 6, 2025

Currently residing in the House

Summary: South Carolina High School Athletic Association

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 3/6/2025 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 8)

 3/6/2025 House Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works** (House Journal‑page 8)

 3/11/2025 House Member(s) request name added as sponsor: Teeple, Guest

 3/11/2025 House Member(s) request name removed as sponsor:
 Mitchell, B. Newton

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[03/06/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/4163_20250306.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ENACTING THE “SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION ACT” BY ADDING CHAPTER 9 TO TITLE 59, so as TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION AND TO PROVIDE THE PURPOSE, FUNCTIONS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOVERNANCE OF THE ASSOCIATION; TO PROVIDE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, INCLUDING CHARTER SCHOOLS, MAY NOT JOIN OR AFFILIATE WITH ANY OTHER ENTITY WITHIN THE STATE FOR THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNING, SANCTIONING, OR OPERATING INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAMS; AND TO PROVIDE PROVISIONS CONCERNING TRANSFER STUDENTS, HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS, PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS, AND APPEALS, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. This act may be cited as the “South Carolina High School Athletic Association Act.”

SECTION 2. Title 59 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

CHAPTER 9

South Carolina High School Athletic Association

 Section 59‑9‑110. (A) There is established the South Carolina High School Athletic Association (SCHAA), an eleemosynary corporation, the resources of which must be used to promote, facilitate, assist, and govern interscholastic athletic programs and events within and among middle and high schools in the State.

 (B) The board of directors for the association shall carry out activities necessary to ensure that athletic programs and competitions are carried out in a fair, safe, and competitive manner.

 Section 59‑9‑120. (A) There is created the Board of Directors for the association composed of eleven individuals who are not current members of the General Assembly as follows:

 (1) one member appointed by the State Superintendent of Education who shall serve as the chair;

 (2) one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

 (3) one member appointed by the Chair of the House Education and Public Works Committee;

 (4) one member appointed by the Leader of the House Majority Caucus;

 (5) one member appointed by the Leader of the House Minority Caucus;

 (6) one member appointed by the President of the Senate;

 (7) one member appointed by the Chair of the Senate Education Committee;

 (8) one member appointed by the Leader of the Senate Majority Caucus;

 (9) one member appointed by the Leader of the Senate Minority Caucus; and

 (10) two members appointed by the Governor, one of which must be recommended by the South Carolina Association of School Administrators.

 (B) No two members may reside within the boundaries of the same traditional school district.

 (C) A member of the board may not be currently employed as an athletics director, coach, principal, superintendent, or other school leader.

 (D) Members shall serve for terms of four years and until successors are appointed and qualify. Vacancies for any reason must be filled in the manner of the original appointment for the unexpired term.

 (E) Members may be paid per diem, mileage, and subsistence as established by the board not to exceed the amounts provided by law for state boards, committees, and commissions. A complete report of the activities of the association must be made annually to the General Assembly.

 Section 59‑9‑130. The board may contract with a third party to assist in the establishment and initial operation of the association. The contract is subject to the requirements of Chapter 35, Title 11.

 Section 59‑9‑140. To carry out its assigned functions, the board is required, but not limited to:

 (1) establish rules and bylaws for the operation of the association;

 (2) create rules for the participation in, and conduct of, athletic competitions within the State;

 (3) establish requirements for student participation that do not contradict state law;

 (4) provide technical assistance to member schools regarding athletic participation;

 (5) recognize and sanction sport programs;

 (6) create regions for schools’ participation based on geographic and student population factors;

 (7) establish a multiplier system for the purpose of classification that takes into account a school’s geographic location, student population, and performance in each sport in which it participates;

 (8) establish a playoff system and championship in each sport for participating schools;

 (9) establish a range of sanctions that may be applied to a student, coach, team, or program and that takes into account factors such as the seriousness, frequency, and other relevant factors when there is a violation of the constitution, bylaws, rules, or other governing provisions of the association;

 (10) create a process and qualifications for home school students to participate on a member school’s team without being subject to a waiting period;

 (11) create a process and qualifications for a student attending a non‑member private or public school to participate on a member school’s team;

 (12) establish a fee schedule for participating schools, which the association shall use in order to operate;

 (13) complete an annual accountability report pursuant to Section 1‑1‑820 and identify key program area descriptions and expenditures and link these to key financial and performance results measures, and provide this report to the General Assembly to post on its internet website; and

 (14) enter into contracts subject to Chapter 35, Title 11.

 Section 59‑9‑150. (A) Notwithstanding the duty to recognize and sanction sport programs listed in Section 59‑9‑140(5), the association shall allow existing private and independent schools that are members of the South Carolina High School league to join and participate in the same manner as public schools. The association shall establish rules and policies for accepting other private and independent schools into full membership.

 (B) The association shall guarantee that an athletic team of a South Carolina home school that is a member of a home school athletic association may not be denied access to preseason and regular season interscholastic athletics including, but not limited to, jamborees and invitational tournaments, based solely on its status as a home school athletic team; provided other rules or policies of the association, body, or entity would apply to the team.

 Section 59‑9‑160. Notwithstanding any athlete transfer rules and policies adopted by the association, students who attend a school outside of their attendance zone may immediately participate in interscholastic competitions if they are otherwise academically eligible and the following conditions are met:

 (1) for students enrolled in middle school, the association shall allow a one‑time transfer after eligibility is established in the seventh grade; and

 (2) for students enrolled in high school, the association shall allow a one‑time transfer after eligibility is established in the ninth grade.

 Section 59‑9‑170. The board of directors shall employ a director and other staff as necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities assigned by the board. The board shall submit to the Agency Head Salary Commission, pursuant to Sections 8‑11‑160 and 8‑11‑165, justification of and recommendations for the salary and any salary increases for the director of the association.

 Section 59‑9‑180. (A) The association shall establish a process in which appeals of the association, body, or entity are made to a disinterested third‑body appellate panel which consists of seven members who serve four year terms, with one person appointed by the delegation of each congressional district.

 (B)(1) A member of the panel serves until his successor is appointed and qualifies. A vacancy on the panel is filled in the manner of the original appointment.

 (2) Members of the appellate panel do not concurrently serve as officers of the association, body, or entity and may not have served as a member of the executive committee within the last three years. Principals and superintendents are able to appeal a ruling of the association, body, or entity to the panel. The appellate panel also must provide the final ruling in any appeal brought against a decision of the association, body, or entity.

 (C) The association shall establish and ensure a procedure for emergency appeals to be held and decided upon in an expedited manner if the normal appellate process would prohibit the participation of a student, team, program, or school in an athletic event, to include practices.

 Section 59‑9‑190. Public schools, including charter schools, may not join or affiliate with any other entity within the State for the purpose of governing, sanctioning, or operating interscholastic athletic programs.

 Section 59‑9‑200. (A) The association must be considered a state agency for the purposes of Chapter 15, Title 2 and subject to audits by the Legislative Audit Council.

(B) The association must be considered an agency for the purposes of Chapter 2, Title 2 and subject to oversight by the House of Representatives and Senate.

 (C) The association, its board of directors, and employees are subject to:

 (1) the applicable provisions of the Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act of 1991, as amended, found in Article 7, Chapter 13, Title 8; and

 (2) the general provisions applicable to public officers and employees found in Chapter 1, Title 8.

 (D) Beginning December 1, 2025 and every year thereafter, the association shall provide a report to the respective chairs of the House Education and Public Works Committee and Senate Education Committee containing, but not limited to, the following:

 (1) the results of an annual audit of the association’s finances;

 (2) the number of schools and student athletes who participated in association activities, which must be listed by classification and whether the school is a charter school, traditional public school, or independent school;

 (3) the number and types of sanctions imposed on any teams; and

 (4) a summary of any changes to the rules, constitution, or bylaws of the association.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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