

SCHOOL CHOICE MATTERS

South Carolina Policy Report

Introduction

PURPOSE

A combination of well-designed policies give all students access to the broadest range of educational opportunities, including key core policies and helpful policy enhancers. The purpose of this document is to provide insight to how well your state is doing at implementing the Ecosystem of School Choice Policies. This state report summarizes evidence across the seven policy buckets, with each policy component detailed in individual cells.

CORE POLICIES

Key policies expand student opportunities.



[Open Enrollment](#)



[Charter Schools](#)



[Private School Choice](#)



[Homeschooling](#)

POLICY ENHANCERS

Supporting policies enhance those opportunities.



[Part-time Enrollment/Course Access](#)



[Learn Everywhere](#)



[Transportation](#)

CORE POLICIES



Open Enrollment in South Carolina

POLICY	RATING	POLICY OVERVIEW
Transfers Between Districts	<p>NO</p> <p>No policy or policy based on ad hoc agreements</p>	<p>South Carolina policy only allows for agreements for students in adjoining districts where the student lives closer to the school in a neighboring district than in the student’s own district.</p> <p>(Code of Laws - Title 59 - Chapter 63 - Pupils Generally (scstatehouse.gov))</p>
Transfers Within Districts	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>School officials can block transfers</p>	<p>South Carolina does not have a mandatory intradistrict open enrollment policy. School districts have discretion to provide for district school choice to allow students in the district to attend a school, other than their zoned school.</p> <p>(See South Carolina Dept of Education, District School Choice)</p> <p>South Carolina Code provides that if school children in one county reside closer to schools in an adjacent county, they may attend schools upon the permission of school authorities. Schools may be admitted upon arrangement relating to per pupil costs and an agreement between districts.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-63-480 Attendance at schools in adjacent county)</p>
Year-round Transfer Window	<p>NO</p> <p>No policy</p>	<p>The transfer decision is made at the local level – South Carolina policy does not address school transfer windows.</p>

<p>Tuition-Free Public Schools</p>	<p>NO No program</p>	<p>South Carolina policy does not address open enrollment, nor does it address tuition issues.</p>
<p>School Capacity Transparency</p>	<p>NO No transparency policy</p>	<p>South Carolina does not provide for school districts to publicly report capacity by school and grade level.</p>
<p>Transfer Data Transparency</p>	<p>NO No transparency in data reporting</p>	<p>South Carolina does not report district-level open enrollment data.</p>
<p>Transparent Appeal Process</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>When a transfer of pupils from one district to another is sought and the trustees of the latter district unreasonably or capriciously withhold their consent, the county board of education of the county in which the districts are located shall have the right, after hearing, to make the transfer.</p>

SOURCE CITATIONS

Statutes

[SC Code 59-40-145 Students attending charter schools outside district of residence](#)

State Department of Education

[South Carolina Dept of Education, District School Choice](#)



Charter Schools in South Carolina

POLICY	RATING	POLICY OVERVIEW
Multiple Charter Authorizers	<p>YES</p> <p>Multiple authorizers</p>	<p>The South Carolina Charter Schools Act provides for the following sponsors of charter schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Carolina Public Charter School Board of Trustees; • Local school board of trustees in which the charter school is to be located; or • Public institution of higher learning or independent institution of higher learning <p>(SC Code 59-40-40 Definitions)</p>
Charter Appeal Process	<p>YES</p> <p>Independent appeals process</p>	<p>South Carolina Code provides that if a local school board of trustees or area commission denies the application, the charter applicant may appeal the denial to the Administrative Law Court.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-40-70 Application requirements and procedures)</p> <p>South Carolina Code does not provide for an appeals process for those seeking sponsorship through the South Carolina Public Charter School Board of Trustees.</p>
Charter Regulatory Flexibility	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Some or no exemptions</p>	<p>South Carolina Code specifies that charter schools are exempt from all provisions of law and regulations applicable to public schools, school boards, or districts.</p> <p>South Carolina charter schools may, in their discretion, hire noncertified teachers in a ratio of up to 25% of its entire teaching staff. Note that in converted charter schools, the school may hire noncertified teachers in a ratio of up to 10% of its entire teaching staff.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-40-50 Exemption; powers and duties; admissions; composition; purposes; governance; transportation)</p>
Equitable Charter Funding	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Disparities exist</p>	<p>South Carolina provides for a formula that will be used by local school board of trustees sponsors to distribute state, county and school district funds. The formula requires: the previous year’s audited total general fund revenues, divided by the previous year’s weighted students, then increased by the Education Finance Act inflation factor, for the years following the audited expenditures, then multiplied by the weighted students</p>

		<p>enrolled in the charter school. This is subject to adjustment for student attendance and state budget allocations based on the same criteria as the local school district.</p> <p>The State Department of Education is also required to disburse funds to those school districts with charter schools that have approved incremental growth and expansion and for opening new charter schools.</p> <p>The South Carolina Public Charter School District or public or independent institution of higher learning sponsor will distribute state funds as provided by the General Assembly. These charter schools do not receive local funds.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-40-140 Funds; services; reports)</p>
<p>Charter Facilities Funding</p>	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Some or no facilities funding</p>	<p>The Charter School Law requires the Department of Education to make available a list of vacant and unused buildings and vacant and unused portions of buildings that are owned by school districts that may be suitable for the operation of a charter school.</p> <p>Where a school district declares a building surplus and chooses to sell or lease the building, the charter school’s board of directors or a charter committee must be given the first refusal to purchase or lease the building under the same or better terms and conditions as it would be offered to the public.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-40-170 Annual listing of buildings suitable for charter school use)</p> <p>South Carolina has created the Charter School Facility Revolving Loan Program – funded through federal funds, state funds, and others including privately donated funds. These funds may be used for construction, purchase, renovation, and maintenance of public charter school facilities.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-40-175 Charter School Facility Revolving Loan Program)</p>
<p>Options for High-Performing Charters</p>	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>No opportunities for high-performing charter schools</p>	<p>South Carolina policies do not provide opportunities for high-performing charter schools.</p>
<p>Charter Zoning Exemptions</p>	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Less than full protections</p>	<p>Under South Carolina Code, charter schools are exempt from state and local taxation, except sales tax, on earnings and property whether owned or leased.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-40-140 Funds; services; reports)</p>

SOURCE CITATIONS			
Statutes	Administrative Code	State Department of Education	Other Resources
<p>SC Code 59-40 South Carolina Charter Schools Act of 1996</p> <p>SC Code 59-40-40 Definitions</p> <p>SC Code 59-40-50 Exemption; powers and duties; admissions; composition; purposes; governance; transportation</p> <p>SC Code 59-40-70 Application requirements and procedures</p> <p>SC Code 59-40-140 Funds; services; reports</p> <p>SC Code 59-40-170 Annual listing of buildings suitable for charter school use</p> <p>SC Code 59-40-175 Charter School Facility Revolving Loan Program</p>	<p>SC Admin. Regulation 43-601 Procedures and Standards for Review of Charter School Applications</p>	<p>South Carolina Dept of Education, Charter Schools Program</p>	<p>South Carolina Public Charter School District</p>



Private School Choice in South Carolina

POLICY	OVERALL RATING	PROGRAM OVERVIEW
<p>Universal Eligibility</p>	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Eligibility less than 100%</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off % of all students served</i></p>	<p>South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program South Carolina Code establishes the South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program. (SC Code 59-8 Education Scholarship Trust Fund)</p> <p>To be eligible for this program, students must be residents of the state and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had not yet attained the age of 5 before September 1 of the previous school year, but attained the age of 5 on or before September of the current school year; or • Received a scholarship under this Code section for the previous school year. • The Code also provides for limits on household income, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2025-26, the student’s household income must not exceed 300% of the federal poverty guidelines; and • In 2026-27 and beyond, the student’s household income must not exceed 500% of the federal poverty guidelines. <p>Students participating in the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund program are not eligible for this program.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-8-110 Definitions)</p>
		<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children The Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children program provides a tax credit to parents for out-of-pocket private school tuition.</p> <p>Exceptional needs children are eligible for this program, which is defined to mean a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who has been evaluated in accordance with the state’s evaluation criteria, as established in Code, and determined eligible as a child with a disability who needs special education and related services, per federal IDEA requirements;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who has been diagnosed within the last 3 years by a licensed speech-language pathologist, psychiatrist, or medical, mental health, psychoeducational, or other comparable licensed health care provider as having a neurodevelopmental disorder, a substantial sensory or physical impairment such as deaf, blind, or orthopedic disability, or some other disability or acute or chronic condition that significantly impedes the student’s ability to learn and succeed in school without specialized instructional and associated supports and services tailored to the child’s unique needs. <p>Further, a “qualifying student” means a student who is an exceptional needs child, a South Carolina resident, and who is eligible to be enrolled in a South Carolina secondary or elementary public school at the kindergarten or later year level for the applicable school year.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>
		<p>LIMITED</p>	<p>Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund</p> <p>The Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund provides tax credits for individuals and businesses who make charitable contributions to the Fund, which provides private school scholarships to eligible children.</p> <p>Exceptional needs children are eligible for this program, which is defined to mean a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who has been evaluated in accordance with the state’s evaluation criteria, as established in Code, and determined eligible as a child with a disability who needs special education and related services, per federal IDEA requirements; • who has been diagnosed within the last 3 years by a licensed speech-language pathologist, psychiatrist, or medical, mental health, psychoeducational, or other comparable licensed health care provider as having a neurodevelopmental disorder, a substantial sensory or physical impairment such as deaf, blind, or orthopedic disability, or some other disability or acute or chronic condition that significantly impedes the student’s ability to learn and succeed in school without specialized instructional and associated supports and services tailored to the child’s unique needs. <p>Further, a “qualifying student” means a student who is an exceptional needs child, a South Carolina resident, and who is eligible to be enrolled in a South Carolina secondary or elementary public school at the kindergarten or later year level for the applicable school year.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>

<p>Comparable Student Funding</p>	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Funding below 90%</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off program with largest number of students (SC Education Scholarship Trust Fund)</i></p>	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program Scholarships are restricted to \$7,500 per student, unless an increased or decreased limit is authorized in the appropriations act. Legislators appropriated \$75 million to fund the ESTF program in the 2025-26 school year, including \$60 million from the General Fund.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-8-120 Administration of fund; 2025-2026 appropriations bill – H4025)</p>
		<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Taxpayers are eligible to refundable tax credits against income taxes, not to exceed \$11,000 per child for tuition payments to an eligible school for an exceptional needs child within the taxpayer’s custody.</p> <p>Note that South Carolina Code provides that if a child within the care and custody of a taxpayer claiming the tax credit also receives a grant from the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund, the taxpayer may only then claim a credit equal to the difference of \$11,000 or the cost of tuition, whichever is lower, and the amount of the grant.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>
		<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund Grants through the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund may be awarded in an amount not exceeding \$11,000 or the total annual cost of tuition at an eligible school, whichever is less.</p> <p>Note that South Carolina Code provides that if a child within the care and custody of a taxpayer claiming the tax credit also receives a grant from the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund, the taxpayer may only then claim a credit equal to the difference of \$11,000 or the cost of tuition, whichever is lower, and the amount of the grant.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>

<p>Uncapped Student Access</p>	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Funding or enrollment cap</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off program with largest number of students</i> (SC Education Scholarship Trust Fund)</p>	<p>LIMITED</p>	<p>South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program South Carolina Code provides for an enrollment cap for this program, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the 2025-26 school year, the program is limited to 10,000 scholarship students; • In the 2026-27 school year, and all years following, the program is limited to 15,000 scholarship students, though the Legislature may increase the appropriation to fund more students if there is unmet demand. <p>(SC Code 59-8-135 Limitations on scholarships)</p>
		<p>LIMITED</p>	<p>Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children The Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children has a tax credit cap of \$2 million for tuition payments made on behalf of qualifying students, unless the general appropriations act increases that limit.</p> <p>Note that if less than the maximum cumulative total of tax credits allowed are authorized, then the maximum cumulative total of tax credits allowed may be increased by up to \$3 million.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>
		<p>LIMITED</p>	<p>Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund South Carolina Code provides that tax credits annually may not exceed cumulatively a total of \$12 million for contributions to the Fund, unless an increased limit is provided for in the annual appropriations act.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>

<p>Extended Application Window</p>	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Application period or periods</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off program with largest number of students (SC Education Scholarship Trust Fund)</i></p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program</p> <p>South Carolina Code requires the Department of Education to open an application window on November 1 and keep it open “on a rolling basis until capacity is met and then shall maintain a waitlist to maximize program participation.”</p> <p>(SC Code 59-8-115 Standard application process; timeline; eligibility; requirements)</p>
		<p>LIMITED</p>	<p>Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children</p> <p>Parents are entitled to a tax credit upon submittal of yearly taxes.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>
		<p>LIMITED</p>	<p>Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund</p> <p>Parents must submit documentation to the public charity documenting the student is an exceptional needs child. Upon approval, the public charity must issue a check to the eligible school in the name of the qualifying student within either 30 days of approval or 30 days of the start of the school’s semester.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p> <p>Exceptional SC indicates applications open in June and close in September of that same year.</p> <p>(Exceptional SC, 24/25 Exceptional SC Applications)</p>
<p>Student Testing Options</p>	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Rigid mandates, multiple tests, or no accountability</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off program with largest number of students (SC Education Scholarship Trust Fund)</i></p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program</p> <p>South Carolina Code provides for several requirements for assessing student progress. Schools must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require scholarship students in grades 3-8 to take the SC Ready or SC Ready alternative summative assessment that is required of students in public schools in the state; and • Require scholarship students in grades 4 and 6 take the SC Pass or SC Pass alternative summative assessment that is required of students in public schools in the state. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In lieu of the above, education service providers can require scholarship students in grades 3-8 to take a nationally norm-referenced summative assessment once per year, or a formative assessment at the beginning of the school year, at the end of the first semester, and at the end of the school year. These assessments must be approved by the Department, aligned with state standards, and include a linking

			<p>study. Require scholarship students in grades 9-12 take a nationally norm-referenced or formative assessment approved by the Department;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education service providers must collect high school graduation information of scholarship students for reporting to the Department. <p>(SC Code 59-8-150 Requirements for education service providers, department, and Education Oversight Committee)</p>
		<p>YES</p>	<p>Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children South Carolina Code relating to the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children defines “eligible school” to be an independent school “where the students attending are administered national achievement or state standardized tests, or both, at progressive grade levels to determine student progress.”</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>
		<p>YES</p>	<p>Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund South Carolina Code relating to the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children defines “eligible school” to be an independent school “where the students attending are administered national achievement or state standardized tests, or both, at progressive grade levels to determine student progress.”</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>
<p>School Autonomy</p>	<p>YES</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off program with largest number of students (SC Education Scholarship Trust Fund)</i></p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program South Carolina Code places some limits on approved independent schools operating as education service providers – for example, these education service providers must comply with all applicable health and safety laws or codes and not unlawfully discriminate based on race, color, or national origin.</p> <p>South Carolina Code further provides that education service providers, not public schools, are not agents of the state or federal government. Therefore, the Department may not regulate the educational program of an approved education provider, and the creation of the program does not expand the regulatory authority of the State, its officers, or school districts to impose regulations beyond those necessary to enforce the requirements of the program. Similarly, “the freedom of education service providers to provide for the educational needs of scholarship students without governmental control must not be abridged.”</p>

			<p>(SC Code 59-8-150 Requirements for education service providers, department, and Education Oversight Committee)</p>
		YES	<p>Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children South Carolina Code provides that the Department of Education, the Education Oversight Committee, and the Department of Revenue, or any other state agency may not regulate the educational program of an independent school that accepts students receiving scholarship grants through this fund.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>
		YES	<p>Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund South Carolina Code provides that the Department of Education, the Education Oversight Committee, and the Department of Revenue, or any other state agency may not regulate the educational program of an independent school that accepts students receiving scholarship grants through this fund.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>
Accessible School Participation	<p>YES</p> <p>No accreditation requirement</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off program with largest number of students (SC Education Scholarship Trust Fund)</i></p>	YES	<p>South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program South Carolina Code does not require participating independent schools that are approved education service providers to be accredited. These schools must have an educational curriculum that includes specific courses specified in the state’s diploma requirements and to meet compulsory attendance and approval requirements in law. Unaccredited or unlicensed providers “must submit documentation of completed background checks to the department as part of their initial application.”</p> <p>(SC Code 59-8-140 Application approval process for education service providers; data tracking)</p>
		LIMITED	<p>Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children South Carolina Code defines “eligible school” to be an independent school that is a member in good standing of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools, the South Carolina Independent Schools Association, or Palmetto Association of Independent Schools.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>

		LIMITED	<p>Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund South Carolina Code defines “eligible school” to be an independent school that is a member in good standing of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools, the South Carolina Independent Schools Association, or Palmetto Association of Independent Schools.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>

ESAs and Parent-Directed Spending

Freedom to Customize	YES	<p>South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program The South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program allows funds to be used for the following qualifying expenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tuition and fees of an education service provider; • textbooks, curriculum, or other instructional materials; • tutoring services, approved by the Department; • computer hardware or other technological devices used primarily for the student’s educational needs; • tuition and fees for an approved nonpublic online education service provider or course; • fees for approved national norm-referenced examinations, advanced placement examinations, or similar assessments, industry certification exams, or examinations related to college or university admission; • educational services for students with disabilities from a licensed or accredited practitioner or provider; • approved contracted services from a public school district, including individual classes, after school tutoring services, transportation, or funds for participation in extracurricular activities; • contracted teaching services and education classes; • fees for transportation; • fees for interdistrict public school transfers; • cost of school uniforms which are required for attendance; • any consumables and items necessary to complete a curriculum or that are otherwise applicable to a course of study that has been approved by the department;
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any other educational expense approved by the department to enable personalized learning consistent with the intent of the law. (SC Code 59-8-110 Definitions) <p>Note: The only qualifying expense not specifically enumerated in statute is for dual enrollment courses.</p>
Freedom to Access	YES	<p>South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program Students participating in the Education Scholarship Trust Fund program may use choice funds for tuition and fees of an education service provider, as well as tuition and fees for an approved nonpublic online education service provider or course.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-8-110 Definitions)</p>
Carry-Over Funding	YES	<p>South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program South Carolina Code provides that unused funds will be rolled over to the next school year, so long as the student still meets the eligibility requirements to participate in the program. These payments remain in “full force” until a student participates in a prohibited activity as specified in the law, the student returns to a public school, or the scholarship student graduates from high school or turns 22 years old.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-8-125 Funds to create, oversee, and administer program; suspension of accounts; unused funds; termination of scholarships)</p>

Tax Credits

Full Tax Credit	YES <i>State’s largest private school choice program does not qualify as a Tax Credit. Score is based off the largest Tax Credit program (Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children)</i>	YES	<p>Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children The Refundable Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children program provides a tax credit to parents for out-of-pocket private school tuition. This makes the taxpayer eligible for a tax credit against income taxes for the full amount of cash and the monetary value of any publicly traded securities.</p> <p>(SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund)</p>
		YES	<p>Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Fund South Carolina Code provides that the tax credits for the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children are dollar-for-dollar. However, Code also provides that a taxpayer may not claim more than 75% of his total tax liability for the year in contribution for this tax credit. The credit is nonrefundable and unused credit may be carried forward 3 tax years.</p>

([SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund](#))

SOURCE CITATIONS

Statutes

[SC Code 12-6-3790 Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children’s Fund](#)

[SC Code 59-8 Education Scholarship Trust Fund](#)

[SC Code 59-8-110 Definitions](#)

[SC Code 59-8-115 Standard application process; timeline; eligibility; requirements](#)

[SC Code 59-8-120 Administration of fund](#)

[SC Code 59-8-135 Limitations on scholarships](#)

[SC Code 59-8-140 Application approval process for education service providers; data tracking](#)

[SC Code 59-8-150 Requirements for education service providers, department, and Education Oversight Committee](#)

[SC Code 59-8-125 Funds to create, oversee, and administer program; suspension of accounts; unused funds; termination of scholarships](#)

State Department of Education

[South Carolina Dept of Education, Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program](#)

Other Resources

[South Carolina Dept of Revenue, ECENC Program Credits](#)

[Exceptional SC](#)

[EdChoice, The ABCs of School Choice: South Carolina \(2024 Edition\)](#)



Homeschooling in South Carolina

POLICY	OVERALL RATING		PROGRAM OVERVIEW
<p>Homeschool without Prior Approval</p>	<p>NO</p> <p>Permission required</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off pathway most directly under parental authority (Homeschooling Under Authority of School District)</i></p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Homeschooling Under Authority of School District</p> <p>South Carolina Code provides that parents may homeschool their children under the authority of a school district, if it is approved by the board of trustees.</p> <p>If permission to begin homeschooling is denied, the parent may appeal the decision within 10 days to the State Board of Education.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-65-40 Home schooling programs)</p>
		<p>YES</p>	<p>Homeschooling with Support of SC Association of Independent Home Schools</p> <p>In lieu of the requirements for homeschooling a student under the authority of school districts, parents may instead choose to educate their children with the support of the South Carolina Association of Independent Home Schools must meet certain requirements established in law and this route will not require permission from local school boards or other administrative bodies.</p> <p>Bona fide membership and continuing compliance with academic standards of the Association will exempt this type of home school from the requirements of homeschooling under the authority of school districts, as required above.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-65-45 Alternative home schooling requirements)</p>
		<p>YES</p>	<p>Homeschooling with Support of Home School Association</p> <p>In lieu of the requirements for parents who choose to homeschool with the approval of a school district, as well as under the auspices of the SC Association of Independent Home Schools, parents may instead choose to educate their children under the auspices of a home school association. For this option, the association must have no fewer than 50 members and meet certain requirements in the law - this route will not require permission from local school board or other administrative bodies.</p>

			<p>Bona fide membership and continuing compliance with academic standards of the home school association will exempt this type of home school from the requirements of homeschooling under the two options discussed above.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-65-47 Associations for home schools; requirements)</p>
<p>No Extra Homeschool Notifications</p>	<p>NO</p> <p>Annual notification</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off pathway most directly under parental authority (Homeschooling Under Authority of School District)</i></p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Homeschooling Under Authority of School District</p> <p>Under the authority of a school district, a parent homeschooling their child must submit semi-annual progress reports which include attendance records and individualized assessments of the student’s academic progress in each of the basic instructional areas.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-65-40 Home schooling programs)</p>
		<p>NO</p>	<p>Homeschooling with Support of SC Association of Independent Home Schools</p> <p>For students homeschooling with the support of the South Carolina Association of Independent Home Schools, the Association is required to report the number and grade level of children homeschooled through the association to the student’s respective school districts annually.</p> <p>Note the Department will also conduct annual reviews of the association standards to ensure the association meets requirements established in law.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-65-45 Alternative home schooling requirements)</p>
		<p>NO</p>	<p>Homeschooling with Support of Home School Association</p> <p>For parents choosing this option to homeschool their student, South Carolina Code requires semiannual progress reports to be submitted by parents which includes attendance records and individualized documentation of the student’s academic progress in the basic instructional areas.</p> <p>Further, the homeschool association must annually report the number and grade level of children homeschooled through the association.</p> <p>Note the Department will also conduct annual reviews of the association standards to ensure the association meets requirements established in law.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-65-47 Associations for home schools; requirements)</p>

<p>No Certification to Homeschool</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>No certification requirement</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off pathway most directly under parental authority (Homeschooling Under Authority of School District)</i></p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>Homeschooling Under Authority of School District</p> <p>Parents must meet the following requirements to homeschool their children in South Carolina:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold at least a high school diploma or the equivalent GED certificate, and attain a passing score on the basic skills examination after the State Department of Education has validated the test for use with homeschooling parents; or • earned a baccalaureate degree. <p>(SC Code 59-65-40 Home schooling programs)</p>
		<p>YES</p>	<p>Homeschooling with Support of SC Association of Independent Home Schools</p> <p>For those students being homeschooled under the auspices of the South Carolina Association of Independent Home Schools, the parent must hold at least a high school diploma or the equivalent GED certificate.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-65-45 Alternative home schooling requirements)</p>
		<p>YES</p>	<p>Homeschooling with Support of Home School Association</p> <p>For students being homeschooled under the auspices of other homeschool associations, the parent must hold at least a high school diploma or the equivalent GED certificate.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-65-47 Associations for home schools; requirements)</p>
<p>Flexible Assessment Options</p>	<p>NO</p> <p>Standardized testing required</p> <p><i>Scoring is calculated based off pathway most directly under parental authority (Homeschooling Under Authority of School District)</i></p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Homeschooling Under Authority of School District</p> <p>As evidence that students are receiving regular instruction, the parent must maintain records for inspection upon notice by a representative of the school district which must include a portfolio of samples of the student’s academic work and a record of evaluations of the student’s academic progress. This must include individualized assessments of the student’s academic progress on each of the basic instructional areas specified in law – the instructional areas include reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies, and in grades 7-12 composition and literature.</p> <p>Further, Code requires students to participate in the annual statewide testing program and the Basic Skills Assessment Program approved by the State Board for their appropriate grade level.</p> <p>Note that South Carolina Code also requires, within the first 15 instructional days of the public school year, all students eligible to enroll in 1st grade to be tested to determine their readiness</p>

			<p>for 1st grade. If the student is determined to be “not ready” the school district will recommend whether the kindergarten or 1st grade curriculum would be appropriate for their child.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-65-40 Home schooling programs)</p>
		YES	<p>Homeschooling with Support of SC Association of Independent Home Schools South Carolina policy does not provide for testing requirements for those students homeschooled with the support of the South Carolina Association of Independent Home Schools.</p>
		YES	<p>Homeschooling with Support of Home School Association South Carolina Code requires educational records to be maintained by the parent, which include portfolios of samples of the student’s academic work and documentation of the student’s academic progress in each of the basic instructional areas, including reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies; and in grades 7-12, composition and literature.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-65-47 Associations for home schools; requirements)</p>

SOURCE CITATIONS

Statutes

- [SC Code 59-65-40 Home schooling programs](#)
- [SC Code 59-65-45 Alternative home schooling requirements](#)
- [SC Code 59-65-47 Associations for home schools; requirements](#)

State Department of Education

- [South Carolina Dept of Education, Home Schooling](#)
- [South Carolina Dept of Education, Option Two: South Carolina Association of Independent Home Schools 2024-25](#)
- [South Carolina Dept of Education, Option Three: Home School Associations 2024-2025](#)

POLICY ENHANCERS



Part-time Enrollment in South Carolina

POLICY	RATING	POLICY OVERVIEW
Resident Course Access	<p>NO</p> <p>No policy</p>	<p>South Carolina policy does not address nonpublic and homeschool student access to individual courses within local school districts.</p>
Nonresident Course Access	<p>NO</p> <p>No program</p>	<p>South Carolina policy does not address nonpublic and homeschool student access to individual courses outside their district of residence.</p>
Virtual Course Access	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Access denied to some resident students, or students must take at least one class in a public school</p>	<p>South Carolina has created the Virtual School Program. VirtualSC allows students to take individual courses for credit, provided they have approval of their sponsoring schools.</p> <p>(South Carolina Dept of Education, VirtualSC)</p> <p>Established in Code, this virtual education program provides access to distance, online, or virtual learning courses offered for credit. A public, private, or homeschool student in South Carolina younger than 21 years old must be eligible to enroll in the virtual education program.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-16-15 Virtual education program; eligibility; grades; exams; computer equipment and internet access; see VirtualSC)</p>

<p>Extracurricular Access</p>	<p>LIMITED</p> <p>Access denied to some resident students, or students must take at least one class in a public school</p>	<p>South Carolina Code provides that participation in interscholastic activities of a public school district by home school, charter school, and Governor’s school students may not be denied so long as the student meets all school district eligibility requirements.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-63-100 Participation in interscholastic activities of public school district by home school, charter school, and Governor’s school students)</p> <p>The South Carolina Charter Schools Act provides that charter schools are eligible for federally, state, and district-sponsored interscholastic leagues, competitions and other programs to the same extent as other public schools. Further, the Code section makes clear that charter school students are eligible to compete for and participate in any extracurricular activities not offered at the charter school, which are offered at the resident public school so long as the student meets the eligibility requirements.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-40-50 Exemption; powers and duties; admissions; composition; purposes; governance; transportation)</p> <p>South Carolina Code is silent regarding nonpublic school participation.</p>
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SOURCE CITATIONS

<p>Statutes</p> <p>SC Code 59-16-15 Virtual education program; eligibility; grades; exams; computer equipment and internet access</p> <p>SC Code 59-40-50 Exemption; powers and duties; admissions; composition; purposes; governance; transportation</p> <p>SC Code 59-63-100 Participation in interscholastic activities of public school district by home school, charter school, and Governor’s school students</p>	<p>State Department of Education</p> <p>South Carolina Dept of Education, VirtualSC</p>	<p>Other Resources</p> <p>VirtualSC</p>
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Learn Everywhere in South Carolina

POLICY	RATING	POLICY OVERVIEW
Provider Qualification Standard	<p>NO</p> <p>No program</p>	<p>South Carolina has not established a Learn Everywhere program.</p>
Course Credit Standard	<p>NO</p> <p>No program</p>	
Core Course Opportunities	<p>NO</p> <p>No program</p>	
Central State List	<p>NO</p> <p>No program</p>	



Transportation in South Carolina

POLICY	RATING	POLICY OVERVIEW
<p>Open Enrollment Transit</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>South Carolina Code provides that the State does not have an obligation to transport students who attend a school outside the school attendance zone in which the student resides, so long as the same grade is taught in an appropriate school that is located within the school district in which the student resides.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-67-420 Extent of transportation to be provided)</p> <p>South Carolina Regulations provide that when an intradistrict Choice program is approved by a Board of Trustees, students may be transported across attendance boundaries, but it must be done in the “most productive and cost efficient manner.”</p> <p>(SC Admin. Regulation 43-80 Operation of Public Student Transportation Services)</p>
<p>Fair Transportation Access</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>The South Carolina Charter Schools Act provides that the state is not responsible for student transportation to a charter school, unless the school is designated as the only school within the local school district’s attendance area. Charter schools may enter contracts with a school district to provide transportation.</p> <p>(SC Code 59-40-50 Exemption; powers and duties; admissions; composition; purposes; governance; transportation)</p> <p>South Carolina Regulations provide that transportation on state-owned/leased buses or by contract of students attending multi-district programs or programs conducted by agencies other than the public schools, will be provided only in situations where the home district has received approval of “another facilities agreement” from the Department.</p> <p>(SC Admin. Regulation 43-80 Operation of Public Student Transportation Services)</p>

<p>Vehicle Flexibility</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>South Carolina Code provides that school buses transporting students must meet federal school bus safety standards.</p> <p>(SC Code 56-5-195 School bus safety standards)</p> <p>A “school bus” is defined to mean a “motor vehicle that complies with the color and identification requirements set forth in [statute] which is used to transport children to or from public school or in connection with school activities...”</p> <p>(SC Code 59-5-190 School bus defined)</p> <p>The South Carolina DMV provides for required licenses for those drivers transporting 10-16 passengers on a school bus and what is required for transporting more than 16.</p>
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SOURCE CITATIONS

Statutes	Administrative Code	State Department of Education	Other Resources
<p>SC Code 59-5-190 School bus defined</p> <p>SC Code 56-5-195 School bus safety standards</p>	<p>SC Admin. Regulation 43-80 Operation of Public Student Transportation Services</p>	<p>South Carolina Dept of Education, Transportation</p>	<p>South Carolina DMV</p>

