The Honorable Ross Turner, Chairman

Education Subcommittee of The Senate of South Carolina

P.O. Box 142

Columbia, SC 29202-0142

February 16, 2023

*Re: Bill S 203 (Session 125) as considered in subcommittee on February 16, 2023*

Dear Senator Turner and Committee Members:

On behalf of the statewide membership of The South Carolina Education Association we wish to convey our support for South Carolina Senate Bill 203 as filed in 125th Session of the General Assembly.

Our support for the bill is drawn based upon the following factors:

1. While technically fire drills are thought to take less than 30 (thirty) minutes to execute, in practice the exercise can take much longer due to several factors. Those reasons include, but are not limited to, the time needed to prepare students for the drill, time delays due to administrative and professional duties, executing the drill itself, and finally, the time needed to safely return to the classroom. In total, the time exerted can easily exceed that of the amount allotted for a single class period.
2. For students with disabilities and other special needs, drills can be exceptionally disruptive. As such, those disturbances can hinder their progress and prove to be challenging for them to overcome for prolonged periods of time.

We believe the bill as presently drafted endeavors to correct inconsistencies as currently articulated in the code by updating statutes to reflect the changes made over the past several years which fulfill the General Assembly’s original intent. Specifically, the bill updates language to reflect the drill execution requirement to occur once per semester versus once a month.

Please contact my office for additional assistance should questions or the need for additional clarification exist.

With kind regards,

Sherry East, President