**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 59‑26‑87 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT CERTAIN SPEECH‑LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED NATIONAL CERTIFICATION FROM THE AMERICAN SPEECH‑LANGUAGE‑HEARING ASSOCIATION AND WHO ARE EMPLOYED IN A SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL RECEIVE A YEARLY INCENTIVE FOR THE LIFE OF THE CERTIFICATION, AND TO PROVIDE THAT THESE INCENTIVES MUST BE PAID FROM FUNDS APPROPRIATED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THIS PURPOSE IF AVAILABLE.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 26, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 59‑26‑87. (A) For purposes of this section, ‘certified speech‑language pathologist’ means a speech‑language pathologist who has:

(1) a master’s degree that includes medical training;

(2) completed a one‑year clinical fellowship;

(3) passed the Praxis Exam; and

(4) received and maintained a Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech‑Language Pathology from the American Speech‑Language‑Hearing Association.

(B) Beginning with the 2009‑2010 school year, the Department of Education shall pay a yearly incentive of three thousand dollars to a certified speech‑language pathologist who:

(1) holds a South Carolina teaching certification as a speech‑language therapist;

(2) is employed full time in a South Carolina school district as a speech‑language pathologist at the time of receiving the incentive;

(3) is not considered a purchased service contractor; and

(4) is not receiving a salary supplement as a result of holding a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.

(C) Incentives paid to a certified speech‑language pathologist pursuant to this section must be paid from funds appropriated by the General Assembly for this purpose. However, the yearly incentives provided by this section must not be paid unless necessary funding in an amount certified by the Office of State Budget of the Budget and Control Board has been appropriated by the General Assembly.

(D) The cost and expenses related to the acquisition and maintenance of the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech‑Language Pathology for the American Speech‑Language‑Hearing Association are the responsibility of the certified speech‑language pathologist.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor and applies beginning with the 2009‑2010 school year.

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