**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING CHAPTER 75 TO TITLE 59 SO AS TO ESTABLISH COOPERATIVE DUAL CREDIT HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS WHICH WILL ENABLE STUDENTS TO CONCURRENTLY OBTAIN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA AND BEGIN OR COMPLETE AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAM, MASTER A CERTIFICATE OR VOCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR EARN UP TO TWO YEARS OF COLLEGE CREDIT WITHIN FOUR YEARS, TO PROVIDE FOR THE MANNER IN WHICH THESE PROGRAMS SHALL BE FUNDED, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR PILOT TESTING FOR A THREE YEAR PERIOD PRIOR TO THEIR CONVERSION STATEWIDE AS DETERMINED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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

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

“CHAPTER 75

Cooperative Dual Credit High School Programs

Section 59‑75‑10. (A) The purpose of this chapter is to authorize local school boards of trustees to jointly establish with one or more boards of trustees of public institutions of higher learning as defined in Section 59‑103‑5 or with the local area commissions of technical colleges in this State cooperative dual credit programs in high schools and colleges or universities that will expand students’ opportunities for educational success through high quality instructional programming. These cooperative dual credit high school programs shall target any of the following groups:

(1) high school students who are at risk of dropping out of school before attaining a high school diploma;

(2) high school students with parents who did not continue education beyond high school;

(3) high school students who would benefit from accelerated academic instruction.

(B) All the cooperative dual credit high school programs established under this chapter shall:

(1) enable students to concurrently obtain a high school diploma and begin or complete an associate degree program, master a certificate or vocation program, or earn up to two years of college credit within four years;

(2) prepare students adequately for future learning in the workforce or in an institution of higher education;

(3) encourage the cooperative or shared use of resources, personnel, and facilities between public schools and colleges or universities, or both;

(4) emphasize parental involvement and provide consistent counseling, advising, and parent conferencing so that parents and students can make responsible decisions regarding course taking and can track the students’ academic progress and success;

(5) develop methods for early identification of potential participating students in high school and provide outreach to those students to promote academic preparation and awareness of the cooperative dual credit high school programs.

(C) Students are eligible to attend these programs beginning with the ninth grade.

Section 59‑75‑20. (A) A local school district board of trustees and at least one board of trustees of an institution of higher learning in this State as defined in Section 59‑103‑5 shall jointly apply to establish a cooperative dual credit high school program under this chapter.

(B) The application shall contain at least the following information:

(1) a description of a program that implements the purposes of this chapter;

(2) the facilities to be used by the program and the manner in which administrative services of the program are to be provided;

(3) a description of student academic and vocational achievement goals and the method of demonstrating that students have attained the skills and knowledge specified for those goals; (4) a description of how the program will be operated, including budgeting, curriculum, transportation, and operating procedures;

(5) the process to be followed by the program to ensure parental involvement;

(6) the process by which students will be selected for and admitted to the program;

(7) a description of the funds that will be used and a proposed budget for the program. This description shall identify how the average daily membership (ADM) and full‑time equivalent (FTE) students are counted;

(8) the qualifications required for individuals employed in the program;

(9) the number of students to be served;

(10) a description of how the program’s effectiveness will be measured in meeting the purposes of this chapter;

(11) the tuition rates to be charged pursuant to Section 59‑75‑50.

(C) The application is due no later than January fifteenth of the applicable year and shall be submitted to the State Commission on Higher Education and the State Department of Education. They shall appoint a joint advisory committee to review the applications and to recommend to the commission and department those programs that meet the requirements of and that achieve the purposes set out in this chapter.

(D) The commission and department may approve programs recommended by the joint advisory committee or may approve other programs that were not recommended. The commission and department shall approve all applications they consider to meet the requirements of this section by March thirty‑first of each year. No application shall be approved unless the commission and department find that the application meets the requirements set out in this chapter and that granting the application would achieve the purposes set out in this chapter. Priority shall be given to applications that are most likely to further state education policies, that address the economic development needs of the economic development regions in which they are located, and that strengthen the education program offered in the local school districts in which they are located.

Section 59‑75‑30. (A) A program approved under this chapter shall operate under the terms of a written agreement signed by the local school board of trustees, the governing board of the public institution of higher learning or technical college, the Commission on Higher Education and the State Department of Education. The agreement shall incorporate the information provided in the application, as modified during the approval process, and any terms and conditions imposed on the program by the Commission on Higher Education and the State Department of Education. The agreement may be for a term of no longer than four school years.

(B) A program approved under this chapter is accountable to the Commission on Higher Education and the State Department of Education.

(C) A program may be operated in a facility owned or leased by the local board of trustees, or the institution of higher learning or technical college.

(D) A program approved under this chapter shall provide instruction based on the schedule of the higher learning institution involved but shall be deemed also to comply with all requirements of K‑12 instruction and course and term duration. The program also shall comply with laws and polices relating to the education of students with disabilities.

(E) A program approved under this chapter shall use those funds specified in Section 59‑75‑40.

Section 59‑75‑40. (A) A school district participating in this program shall be responsible for one‑half of the tuition costs of the students in the program from its district and shall use for this purpose those funds necessary from its average total per pupil funding level from federal, state, and local sources exclusive of local debt service for the applicable fiscal year (this level for Fiscal Year 2012‑2013 being $11,770) to pay for its share of the tuition cost of a student from the district who participates in this program during that fiscal year.

(B) The General Assembly in the annual general appropriations act for a particular fiscal year shall appropriate from the Education Lottery Account sufficient funds to pay for one‑half of tuition cost in the aggregate of all students participating in the program or estimated to participate in the program for that fiscal year.

(C) Enrollment in the cooperative dual credit high school program is capped at a maximum of three hundred students per school district. If more students apply to participate than there are slots available, students shall be selected by lot by the district with equal numbers divided between students in college credit curriculums and students in vocational or technical education programs.

Section 59‑75‑50. Public institutions of higher education participating in this program shall charge tuition rates for high school students in the program not to exceed tuition rates charged to regularly enrolled students. The amount of tuition rates charged shall be specified in the application filed pursuant to Section 59‑75‑20.

Section 59‑75‑60. The State Board of Education and the Commission on Higher Education shall evaluate the success of students in the program approved under this chapter. Success shall be measured by high school retention rates, high school completion rates, high school dropout rates, certification and associate degree completion, admission to four‑year institutions, post‑graduation employment in career or study‑related fields, and employer satisfaction of employees who participated in and graduated from the programs. The board and commission shall jointly report by January fifteenth of each year to the House Education and Public Works Committee and the Senate Education Committee on the evaluation of these programs.

Section 59‑75‑70. Beginning on July 1, 2013 and ending on June 30, 2016, the cooperative dual credit high school programs authorized by this chapter shall be pilot‑tested in six school districts of this State chosen by the State Department of Education from those school districts which apply. Two districts must be from the upstate, two from the midlands region, and two from the lower state. Based on the evaluations received pursuant to Section 59‑75‑40, the General Assembly by law may expand those programs statewide.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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