**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 59‑20‑52 SO AS TO ENACT THE STEP INCENTIVE FOR SUCCESSFUL TEACHERS IN LOW‑PERFORMING SCHOOLS (STILPS) STUDY COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP A STEP INCREASE COMPENSATION PLAN FOR HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS WITH DEMONSTRATED SUCCESS IN ELEVATING STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND WHO SERVE IN LOW‑PERFORMING SCHOOLS AS A REWARD FOR GAINS IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT BY THEIR STUDENTS; TO PROVIDE FOR ITS MEMBERSHIP AND DUTIES, AND TO REQUIRE THE COMMITTEE TO MAKE A REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, AND THE GOVERNOR, AND TO PROVIDE FOR ITS TERMINATION; AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL PROMULGATE REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY COMMITTEE EFFECTIVE STARTING WITH THE 2016‑2017 SCHOOL YEAR.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 20, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 59‑20‑52. (A)(1) There is created the STEP Incentive for Successful Teachers in Low‑Performing Schools (STILPS) Study Committee to study and make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor with respect to a step increase compensation plan for highly qualified teachers with demonstrated success in elevating student academic achievement and who serve in low‑performing schools as a reward for gains in academic achievement by their students.

(2)(a) The committee shall consist of eleven members as follows:

(i) three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(ii) three members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate;

(iii) three members appointed by the State Superintendent of Education; and

(iv) two members appointed by the Governor.

(b) Members of the committee shall serve without compensation, but are allowed the mileage, subsistence, and per diem allowed by law for members of state boards, committees, and commissions, to be paid equally from approved accounts of the House of Representatives, Senate, and the State Department of Education.

(c) The committee shall choose its officers and must be provided with clerical, administrative, and research services by the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the State Department of Education.

(3) The committee shall develop:

(a) criteria for identifying teachers who have a demonstrated history of successfully elevating student academic achievement, particularly in underperforming schools;

(b) criteria for identifying schools with the highest number of students eligible for the federal free and reduced lunch program, and establish a threshold to determine to which of these schools the step increases provided in this section apply;

(c) criteria for setting incremental benchmarks of academic improvement of students taught by these teachers as a means for setting correlated graduated step increases to comprise a schedule of minimum salaries for these teachers; and

(d) develop a schedule of minimum salaries for these teachers as an incentive to teach in these schools. These minimum salaries must be at least ten percent higher than those of the schedule provided in Section 59‑20‑50(4)(a) and (b).

(4) The committee shall produce a report with recommendations and forward that report and recommendations to the General Assembly, the State Department of Education, and the Governor by January 1, 2016, at which time the committee terminates.

(B)(1) In addition to the other provisions of Section 59‑20‑50(4), the State Department of Education, based on recommendations of the STILPS Study Committee, shall develop regulations to implement the recommendations of the STILPS Study Committee.

(2) The provisions of this section take effect beginning with the 2016‑2017 school year.”

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

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