**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING ARTICLE 13 TO CHAPTER 1, TITLE 13 SO AS TO TRANSFER THE REGIONAL EDUCATION CENTERS ESTABLISHED BY THE EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE; TO AMEND SECTION 59‑59‑170, RELATING TO THE EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL, AND SECTION 59‑59‑190, RELATING TO ASSISTANCE THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE, THE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION, AND THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN PROGRAMS UNDER THE SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACT, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES; AND TO REPEAL SECTION 59‑59‑180 RELATING TO REGIONAL EDUCATION CENTERS.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 1, Title 13 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Article 13

Regional Education Centers

Section 13‑1‑1810. The powers and duties of the Education and Economic Development Coordinating Council relating to regional education centers pursuant to Sections 59‑59‑170 and 59‑59‑180 are transferred to the Department of Commerce.

Section 13‑1‑1820. (A) The Department of Commerce shall provide oversight to the regional education centers, which are to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of information, resources, and services to students, educators, employers, and the community as provided in this article.

(B) The primary responsibilities of these centers are to:

(1) provide services to students and adults for career planning, employment seeking, training, and other support functions;

(2) provide information, resources, and professional development programs to educators;

(3) provide resources to school districts for compliance and accountability pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 59, Title 59;

(4) provide information and resources to employers including, but not limited to, education partnerships, career oriented learning, and training services;

(5) facilitate local connections among businesses and those involved in education;

(6) work with school districts and institutions of higher education to create and coordinate workforce education programs; and

(7) ensure each regional education center has a career development facilitator.

(C)(1) Each regional education center shall have a career development facilitator to coordinate career oriented learning, career development, and postsecondary transitioning for the schools in its region.

(2) A career development facilitator must be certified and recognized by the National Career Development Association.

(D) The centers shall provide data and reports that the department requests.

(E)(1) The regional centers must conform to the geographic configuration of the Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA) of the South Carolina Workforce Investment Act. Each regional center shall have an advisory board comprised of a school district superintendent, high school principal, local workforce investment board chairperson, technical college president, four‑year college or university representative, career center director or school district career and technology education coordinator, parent‑teacher organization representative, and business and civic leaders. Appointees must reside or do business in the geographic area of the center. Appropriate local legislative delegations shall make the appointments to the regional center boards.

(2) The regional centers shall include, but not be limited to, the one‑stop shops, workforce investment boards, tech prep consortia, and regional instructional technology centers.

Section 13‑1‑1840. The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce, in collaboration with the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education and the Commission on Higher Education, shall assist the Department of Commerce in planning and promoting the career information and employment options and preparation programs provided for in this section and in the establishment of the regional education centers by:

(1) identifying potential employers to participate in the career oriented learning programs;

(2) serving as a contact point for employees seeking career information and training;

(3) providing labor market information including, but not limited to, supply and demand;

(4) promoting increased career awareness and career counseling through the management and promotion of the South Carolina Occupational Information System;

(5) collaborating with local agencies and businesses to stimulate funds; and

(6) cooperating in the creation and coordination of workforce education programs.”

SECTION 2. Sections 59‑59‑170(B) of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 88 of 2005, is amended to read:

“(B) The ~~council~~ department shall:

(1) advise the Department of Education on the implementation of this chapter;

(2) review accountability and performance measures for implementation of this chapter;

(3) ~~designate and oversee the coordination and establishment of the regional centers established pursuant to Section 59‑59‑180.~~

~~(4)~~ report annually by December first to the Governor, the General Assembly, the State Board of Education, and other appropriate governing boards on the progress, results, and compliance with the provisions of this chapter and its ability to provide a better prepared workforce and student success in postsecondary education;

(~~5~~4) make recommendations to the Department of Education for the development and implementation of a communication and marketing plan to promote statewide awareness of the provisions of this chapter; and

(~~6~~5) provide input to the State Board of Education and other appropriate governing boards for the promulgation of regulations to carry out the provisions of this chapter including, but not limited to, enforcement procedures, which may include monitoring and auditing functions, and addressing consequences for noncompliance.”

SECTION 3. Section 59‑59‑190 of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 88 of 2005, is amended to read:

“Section 59‑59‑190. (A) The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce, in collaboration with the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education and the Commission on Higher Education, shall assist the Department of Education, in planning and promoting the career information and employment options and preparation programs provided for in this chapter ~~and in the establishment of the regional education centers~~ by:

(1) identifying potential employers to participate in the career‑oriented learning programs;

(2) serving as a contact point for employees seeking career information and training;

(3) providing labor market information including, but not limited to, supply and demand;

(4) promoting increased career awareness and career counseling through the management and promotion of the South Carolina Occupational Information System;

(5) collaborating with local agencies and businesses to stimulate funds; and

(6) cooperating in the creation and coordination of workforce education programs.

(B) The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce shall assist in providing a link between employers in South Carolina and youth seeking employment.”

SECTION 4. Section 59‑59‑180 of the 1976 Code is repealed.

SECTION 5. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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