**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, SO AS TO ENACT THE “EXPANDED VIRTUAL LEARNING ACT”; TO AMEND SECTION 59‑16‑15, RELATING TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA VIRTUAL SCHOOL PROGRAM, SO AS TO RESTYLE THE PROGRAM AS A VIRTUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AND TO REMOVE LIMITS ON THE NUMBER OF ONLINE CREDITS A STUDENT MAY BE AWARDED UNDER THE PROGRAM; AND TO AMEND SECTION 59‑40‑65, RELATING TO ENROLLMENT OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA VIRTUAL SCHOOL PROGRAM, SO AS TO MAKE A CONFORMING CHANGE.

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

SECTION 1. Section 59‑16‑15 of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 26 of 2007, is amended to read:

“Section 59‑16‑15. (A) The State Board of Education is authorized to establish ~~the South Carolina Virtual School Program~~ a virtual education program to provide South Carolina students access to distance, online, or virtual learning courses offered for an initial unit of credit. Additionally, the ~~South Carolina Virtual School Program~~ virtual education program shall offer access to credit recovery programs for students who have been identified by a school district as not having received credit for a course previously taken or for students who have been identified by a school district as not likely to receive credit for a course in which the student is currently enrolled. Students may enroll in courses for credit recovery based on policies established by the State Board of Education. The ~~South Carolina Virtual School Program~~ virtual education program shall not award a South Carolina High School diploma.

(B) A public, private, or homeschool student residing in South Carolina who is twenty‑one years of age or younger ~~shall~~ must be eligible to enroll in the ~~South Carolina Virtual School Program~~ virtual education program. A private school or home school student enrolled in the ~~South Carolina Virtual School Program~~ virtual education program must not be entitled to any rights, privileges, courses, activities, or services available to a public school student other than receiving an appropriate unit of credit for a completed course.

(C) ~~Students may be awarded a maximum of three online initial credits in a school year, and no more than twelve online initial credits throughout high school. However, the State Board of Education shall establish an appeals process whereby the governing body of the student’s school district may grant a waiver to exceed the established limit.~~

~~(D)~~ Local school districts shall accurately transcribe a student’s final numeric grade to the student’s permanent record and transcript. Home school students and private school students shall receive a certified grade report indicating date, course, and final numeric grade from the ~~South Carolina Virtual School Program~~ virtual education program or an entity approved by the State Board of Education.

(~~E~~D) Students enrolled in an online course for a unit of credit must be administered final exams and appropriate state assessments in a proctored environment.

(~~F~~E) It is not the responsibility of the school, district, or state to provide home computer equipment and Internet access for enrollment in courses provided by the ~~South Carolina Virtual School Program~~ virtual education program. However, nothing in this section shall prohibit a school or district from providing home computer equipment or Internet access to students enrolled in the ~~South Carolina Virtual School Program~~ virtual education program.”

SECTION 2. Section 59‑40‑65(D) of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 26 of 2007, is amended to read:

“(D) Charter school students may enroll in the ~~South Carolina Virtual School Program~~ Department of Education’s virtual education program pursuant to program requirements.”

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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