**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 59‑39‑100, AS AMENDED, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE UNIFORM HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA FOR GRADUATES OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS, SO AS TO REVISE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING DIPLOMAS, TO PROVIDE PERSONALIZED PATHWAYS FOR STUDENTS, TO PROVIDE STUDENTS’ COURSEWORK MUST BE ALIGNED WITH THEIR PERSONALIZED PATHWAYS AND BASED ON THEIR POSTSECONDARY PLANS, TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO PROMULGATE REGULATIONS CONCERNING RELATED PROCEDURES, TO PROVIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA FOR UNIFORM STATE‑RECOGNIZED EMPLOYABILITY CREDENTIALS ALIGNED TO INDIVIDUALIZED GRADUATION PLANS AND PROGRAMS OF STUDY FOR STUDENTS POTENTIALLY UNABLE TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF UNIFORM DIPLOMA PATHWAYS, TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO MONITOR AND ANNUALLY REPORT THE NUMBER OF DIPLOMAS AND EMPLOYABILITY CREDENTIALS EARNED BY STUDENTS, AND TO MAKE THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT APPLICABLE BEGINNING WITH STUDENTS ENTERING THE NINTH GRADE FOR THE 2018‑2019 SCHOOL YEAR.

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

SECTION 1. Section 59‑39‑100 of the 1976 Code, as last amended by Act 49 of 2005, is further amended to read:

“Section 59‑39‑100. (A) Diplomas issued to graduates of accredited high schools within this State must be uniform in every respect and particularly as to color, size, lettering, and marking. ~~The number of units required for a state high school diploma is twenty units as prescribed by the State Board of Education. Beginning in the 1986‑87 academic year, a minimum of three units must be earned in mathematics and a minimum of two units must be earned in science~~ In accordance with Section 59‑59‑10, et seq., districts and schools shall provide students with personalized pathways for earning the uniform diploma, and students may earn endorsements based upon their course of study, which may be represented by seals added to the student’s uniform diploma. The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations establishing these pathways and endorsements.

(B) ~~One unit in computer science, if approved by the State Department of Education for this purpose, may be counted toward the mathematics requirement.~~ Beginning with students entering the ninth grade in School Year 1997‑1998, the number of units required for a high school diploma was increased to twenty‑four units. To support the Profile of the Graduate, for students entering the ninth grade beginning with the 2018‑2019 School Year, the twenty‑four units required are as prescribed in this section and in regulation by the State Board of Education.

(1) Students will continue to be required to earn the units of credit as prescribed in regulation, to include one unit in computer science, which shall include computer coding and programming and when applicable offer certifications or credentials.

(2) Coursework must be aligned with a student’s personalized diploma pathway. The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations that outline procedures for approval of courses to personalize pathways based on students’ postsecondary plans and include an annually updated course activity coding manual listing approved courses. The individualized graduation planning process must plan each student’s personalized pathway based on his postsecondary plans.

(C) ~~Students who earn one unit in science and six or more units in a specific occupational service area will meet the science requirements for a state high school diploma. Career and technology programs operating on a 3‑2‑1 structure may count pre‑career and technology education as one of the six required units.~~

~~(D)~~ ~~Beginning with the ninth grade class of school year 1997‑98, the number of units required for a high school diploma is twenty‑four units as prescribed by the State Board of Education by regulation, with one additional unit required in mathematics, science, and computer science to include keyboarding. For students in a college preparatory track, as defined by the state board, one additional unit must be earned in a foreign language; and for students in a track designed to enter the work force, as defined by the state board, one additional career and technology unit must be earned. Beginning with the ninth grade class of school year 1997‑98, if a student counts one unit of computer science toward his mathematics requirement as permitted above, one additional unit of computer science must be earned~~ The State Board of Education, through the Department of Education and in collaboration with the Vocational Rehabilitation Department, the Department of Employment and Workforce, businesses, and stakeholders shall develop criteria for uniform state‑recognized employability credentials that are aligned to the individualized graduation plan and program of study for students who potentially are unable to achieve successful completion of a uniform diploma pathway. This includes a student with a disability whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines that a diploma pathway is not within his reach and would not provide a free appropriate public education. The credentials must be uniform in size, shape and design.

(D) The department shall monitor the number of diplomas and employability credentials earned by students and shall report to the State Board of Education and the General Assembly biannually by February 15, beginning in 2020.

(E) Nothing in this section prohibits local school boards of trustees from awarding recognition to students who complete additional units and credits beyond those required by this section.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect with students entering ninth grade beginning with the 2018‑2019 School Year.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑