**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 59‑156‑120, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO DISTRICTS INCLUDED IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA CHILD EARLY READING DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION PROGRAM, SO AS TO EXPAND THE PROGRAM STATEWIDE BEGINNING WITH THE 2021‑2022 SCHOOL YEAR, SO AS TO MAKE THE PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO ANY CHILD WHO MEETS CERTAIN ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF RESIDENCY; AND TO AMEND SECTION 59‑156‑130, RELATING TO ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT IN THE PROGRAM, SO AS TO REVISE QUALIFICATIONS TO INCLUDE CHILDREN SCORING AT OR BELOW THE TWENTY‑FIFTH NATIONAL PERCENTILE ON CERTAIN TESTING REGARDLESS OF INCOME LEVEL, SUBJECT TO SPACE AVAILABILITY.

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

SECTION 1. Section 59‑156‑120(A)(3) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(3) ~~With any funds remaining after funding the school districts delineated in items (1) and (2)~~ Beginning with the 2021‑2022 School Year, the program must be expanded statewide~~. The General Assembly, in the annual general appropriations bill, shall set forth the priority schedule, the funding, and the manner in which the program is expanded~~ to any child who meets the eligibility requirements of Section 59‑156‑130, regardless of the child’s district of residence.”

SECTION 2. Section 59‑156‑130(C)(2) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(2) If ~~by October first of the school year at least seventy‑five percent of the total number of children eligible for the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program in a district or county are projected to be enrolled in that program, Head Start, or ABC Child Care Program as determined by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps, Child Early Reading Development and Education Program providers may then enroll pay‑lunch children who score at or below the twenty‑fifth national percentile on two of the three DIAL‑3 subscales and may receive reimbursement for these children if funds are available~~ before September fifteenth of the school year approved providers have available space to serve additional children and if funds are available, the providers may enroll children who do not meet the income guidelines but who score at or below the twenty‑fifth national percentile on screeners approved by the State Board of Education.”

SECTION 3. This act takes effect on July 1, 2021.

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