**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 59‑18‑310, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS UNDER THE EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, SO AS TO ELIMINATE SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENTS FOR THIRD GRADE THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE AND REMOVE SCIENCE ASSESSMENTS FOR THIRD GRADE; TO AMEND SECTION 59‑18‑320, RELATING TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES; TO AMEND SECTION 59‑18‑325, RELATING TO THE PROCUREMENT OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, SO AS TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES; AND TO AMEND SECTION 59‑155‑180, RELATING TO LITERACY ADD‑ON ENDORSEMENTS REQUIRED UNDER THE READ TO SUCCEED ACT, SO AS TO CREATE A FUND WITHIN THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REIMBURSE TEACHERS FOR ALL OR A PORTION OF TUITION COSTS OF OBTAINING LITERACY ADD‑ON ENDORSEMENTS, SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS BASED ON APPROPRIATIONS BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP RELATED GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THESE PROVISIONS.

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

SECTION 1. Section 59‑18‑310(B)(1) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(1) The statewide assessment program must include the subjects of English/language arts~~,~~ and mathematics~~, science, and social studies~~ in grades three through eight and science in grades four and eight, as delineated in Section 59‑18‑320, and end‑of‑course tests for courses selected by the State Board of Education and approved by the Education Oversight Committee for federal accountability, which award units of credit in English/language arts, mathematics, and science~~, and social studies~~. A student’s score on an end‑of‑year assessment may not be the sole criterion for placing the student on academic probation, retaining the student in his current grade, or requiring the student to attend summer school. Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, students are required to pass a high school credit course in science and a course in United States history in which end‑of‑course examinations are administered to receive the state high school diploma. Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, students are no longer required to meet the exit examination requirements set forth in this section and State Regulation to earn a South Carolina high school diploma.”

SECTION 2. Section 59‑18‑320(B) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(B) After review and approval by the Education Oversight Committee, and pursuant to Section 59‑18‑325, the standards‑based assessment of mathematics~~,~~ and English/language arts~~, social studies, and science~~ will be administered for accountability purposes to all public school students in grades three through eight, and science in grades four and eight, to include those students as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and by Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. To reduce the number of days of testing, to the extent possible, field test items must be embedded with the annual assessments. To ensure that school districts maintain the high standard of accountability established in the Education Accountability Act, performance level results reported on school and district report cards must meet consistently high levels in all ~~four~~ three core content areas. For students with documented disabilities, the assessments developed by the Department of Education shall include the appropriate modifications and accommodations with necessary supplemental devices as outlined in a student’s Individualized Education Program and as stated in the Administrative Guidelines and Procedures for Testing Students with Documented Disabilities.”

SECTION 3. Section 59‑18‑325(C)(3) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(3) Beginning with the 2017‑2018 School Year, the department shall procure and administer the standards‑based assessments of mathematics and English/language arts to students in grades three through eight. The department also shall procure and administer the standards‑based assessment in science to students in grades four~~, six,~~ and eight~~, and the standards‑based assessment in social studies to students in grades five and seven~~.”

SECTION 4. Section 59‑155‑180(C) of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an item at the end to read:

“( ) Beginning in Fiscal Year 2019‑2020, there is created a fund within the State Department of Education to reimburse teachers for all or a portion of the tuition costs of obtaining a literacy add‑on endorsement required by this section. Availability of funds is subject to appropriations by the General Assembly. The department shall develop guidelines for the implementation of this section, including a process for applying for reimbursement, required documentation, and other provisions the department considers appropriate. The department may not charge a fee for processing a reimbursement request under the provisions of this item.”

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

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