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Indicates New Matter

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ADOPTED AND AMENDED

March 3, 2021

**S. 208**

Introduced by Senators Hembree, Bennett, Loftis and Gustafson

S. Printed 3/3/21--S.

Read the first time January 12, 2021.

**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 59‑19‑350(A) OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO SCHOOLS OF CHOICE, TO PROVIDE THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAY INSTEAD CREATE MULTIPLE SCHOOLS OF INNOVATION, AND TO PROVIDE THAT EACH EXEMPTION FROM STATE STATUTES AND REGULATIONS BY SCHOOLS OF INNOVATION MUST BE APPROVED BY A TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Amend Title To Conform

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

SECTION 1. Section 59‑19‑350(A) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“Section 59-19-350. (A)(1) A local school district board of trustees of this State desirous of creating an avenue for new, innovative, and more flexible ways of educating children within their district, may create ~~a school~~ schools of ~~choice~~ innovation within the district that ~~is~~ are exempt from state statutes which govern other schools in the district and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education. To achieve the status of exemption from specific statutes and regulations, the local board of trustees, at a public meeting, shall identify specific statutes and regulations which will be considered for exemption and shall disclose the financial model to be used. The exemption may be granted by the governing board of the district only if there is a two‑thirds affirmative vote of the board for each exemption and the proposed exemption is approved by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the State Board of Education.

(2) Each school of innovation annually before July first shall:

(a) demonstrate compliance with the financial model identified in item (1);

(b) provide full financial statements detailing how it receives and expends funds; and

(c) report the academic achievement of its students as indicated by the performance of its students on the same assessments and matrices required of all other public schools, based on grade level.

(3) Nothing in this section permits a local school district board of trustees to relinquish control or oversight of the schools created pursuant to this section, and the local school district board must ensure transparent and timely reporting of fiscal and academic performance for each school of innovation.

(4) In addition to exempting one or more schools within a district as provided in item (1), a local school board of trustees may choose to exempt all schools in the district by following the procedures in item (1) for exempting individual schools.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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