**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, TO ENACT THE “SOUTH CAROLINA STEM OPPORTUNITY ACT” BY ADDING ARTICLE 17 TO CHAPTER 1, TITLE 13 SO AS TO ESTABLISH THE SOUTH CAROLINA SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) COALITION WITHIN THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, THE SOUTH CAROLINA SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) EDUCATION FUND WITHIN THE STATE TREASURY, AND THE SC STEM COALITION ADVISORY COUNCIL, AND TO PROVIDE THEIR RESPECTIVE PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS.

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

SECTION 1. This act must be known and may be cited as the “South Carolina STEM Opportunity Act”.

SECTION 2. Chapter 1, Title 13 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Article 17

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Coalition

Section 13‑1‑2210. The South Carolina Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Coalition (Coalition) is established within the South Carolina Department of Commerce. The purpose of the Coalition is to build public/private partnerships among state agencies, state‑funded entities, not‑for‑profits, private businesses, entities, organizations, and industries with the goal of building a technology‑ready STEM workforce and ensuring South Carolina students are prepared for STEM career opportunities within the this State.

Section 13‑1‑2220. (A) There is created in the State Treasury the South Carolina Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education Fund (Fund). The Fund is separate and distinct from the general fund of the State and all other funds. The Fund shall consist of appropriations and donations, contributions, bequests, or other gifts. Earnings and interest on the Fund must be credited to it and any balance in this fund at the end of the fiscal year carries forward in the fund in the succeeding fiscal year.

(B) Monies in the Fund must be expended solely to support the programs and priorities of the State in the advancement of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics for the purposes provided in this article.

(C) The Coalition may accept funds from other public entities and may accept private donations, contributions, bequests, or other gifts. Such monies received must be deposited into the Fund.

Section 13‑1‑2230. (A) There is created the SC STEM Coalition Advisory Council (Advisory Council) whose purpose is to:

(1) approve all expenditures from the STEM Education Fund;

(2) identify appropriate outcomes and measures of the Coalition’s impact;

(3) ensure equitable, statewide application of Coalition resources;

(4) identify opportunities aligned with the mission of the Coalition; and

(5) promote activities of the Coalition among peer organizations, both within and outside this State.

(B)(1) The Advisory Council consists of eleven members consisting of:

(a) the Secretary of the Department of Commerce or designee, who shall serve conterminously with the appointing director and who shall serve as chair of the Advisory Council;

(b) the Director of the Department of Employment and Workforce or designee, who shall serve conterminously with the appointing director;

(c) the State Superintendent of Education or designee, who shall serve conterminously with the appointing superintendent;

(d) one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives who shall serve a term of four years or until his successor is appointed and qualified;

(e) one member appointed by the President of the Senate who shall serve a term of four years or until his successor is appointed and qualified;

(f) three members appointed by the Governor to represent STEM‑related business and industry in this State who shall serve terms of four years and until their successors are appointed and qualified; and

(g) three members appointed by the Secretary of Commerce to represent higher education, including the technical colleges in this State, who shall serve terms of four years and until their successors are appointed and qualified.

(2) Initial appointments must be made before August 1, 2022, at which time the Secretary of the Department of Commerce or designee shall call the first meeting.

(3) A member of the Advisory Council may not receive compensation for service but may receive the usual mileage, subsistence, and per diem as provided by law for members of state boards, committees, and commissions. Vacancies must be filled in the manner of original appointment and, in the case of members appointed pursuant to item (1)(e) and (f), for the unexpired portion of the term and until successors are appointed and qualified.

Section 13‑1‑2240. The Coalition shall:

(1) be administered by a director appointed by the Secretary of Commerce;

(2) provide a coordination point for STEM education programs in K‑12 and higher education throughout South Carolina;

(3) promote STEM education statewide in coordination with business and industry in support of the long‑term economic prosperity of South Carolinians;

(4) ensure the development of a South Carolina STEM workforce with better access to competitive employment opportunities;

(5) create STEM opportunities for South Carolina students through apprenticeships, internships, competitions, and private/public partnerships;

(6) support the efforts of Clemson University, through the S2TEM Centers, to provide professional development to educators and, with other institutions of higher education, to expand STEM opportunities in the State for high‑quality professional development for STEM educators with special emphasis on improving student learning outcomes in mathematics;

(7) collaborate in the research and development of tools and best practices in STEM education with K‑12 schools, institutions of higher education, state and federal agencies, business/industry partners and other entities as appropriate;

(8) facilitate participation in interscholastic, STEM‑related competitions;

(9) promote STEM teaching as a career opportunity;

(10) annually identify and provide seed funding to school‑based pilot STEM programs equitably distributed across the State;

(11) annually advocate for a SC STEM Education Month and a SC STEM Education Day at the State Capitol and associated activities to promote STEM education;

(12) annually promote and support a SC STEM Educator of the Year award and regional finalists for the award;

(13) promote public awareness of STEM career opportunities through regional festivals and other community engagement strategies;

(14) promote business and industry involvement in the actions and activities of the Coalition;

(15) perform gap analysis and needs assessments to identify industry and business needs and the resulting requirements for teacher professional development activities and initiatives;

(16) support high‑quality professional learning focused on career readiness and talent development and provide other assistance for educators and students;

(17) engage business and industry in support of STEM activities for schools to enhance career readiness;

(18) develop and maintain statewide and regional partnerships with not‑for‑profit, STEM‑missioned entities to promote STEM learning and career opportunities in underserved communities; and

(19) annually before July first report appropriate outcomes and measures of the impact of the Coalition to these entities:

(a) the Office of the Governor through the Department of Commerce;

(b) the State Superintendent of Education;

(c) the General Assembly through the Senate Education Committee and the House Education and Public Works Committee;

(d) the Education Oversight Committee; and

(e) the Advisory Council.”

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

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