



This Bill Analysis reflects the contents of the bill as it was presented in committee.

HOUSE BILL 552: After-School Robotics Grants/Athletics.

2019-2020 General Assembly

Committee:	House Education - K-12. If favorable, re-refer to Appropriations, Education. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	April 9, 2019
Introduced by:	Reps. Hardister, Saine, Horn, Beasley	Prepared by:	Samantha Yarborough
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H552-CSBN-8		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 552 would establish an educational and competitive after-school robotics grant program, require the State Board of Education to adopt rules for competitive robotics as an interscholastic athletic activity, and permit excused absences for competitive robotics.*

The PCS would make technical changes.

CURRENT LAW and BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1

Section 1 of House Bill 552 would create an educational and competitive after-school robotics grant program administered by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Any public school unit would be eligible to apply for a grant to develop an educational and competitive after-school robotics program with a robotics partner.

- Public school unit would include: a local school administrative unit, charter school, regional school, innovative school, or laboratory school.
- Robotics partner would include: a third-party entity approved by DPI that is able to provide support of an after-school robotics program. To be able to provide adequate support, a robotics partner must meet at least the following criteria: (i) have a national presence in robotics education and competition; (ii) provide adequate instruction and programming for students and adult volunteers in robotics education, project-based learning, and competitive robotics; and (iii) promote a safe and equitable social environment.

DPI would be required to develop and publish criteria and guidelines for applications. Applications would be accepted through September 30 of each school year, and would have to include, at a minimum, the following information: (i) evidence that the applicant has or will be able to establish a relationship with a robotics partner, and (ii) a proposed budget for the educational and competitive after-school robotics program.

DPI would be required to award grants by October 31 of each year for any of the following purposes: (i) establishing a relationship with a robotics partner, (ii) purchasing robotics kits, (iii) providing stipends for coaches, (iv) making payments associated with participation in a robotics league or robotics competition, and (v) paying fees incurred as part of the administration of a robotics team.

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DPI would have to report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division by July 15, 2020, and annually thereafter, the following information: (i) the number and amounts of grants awarded, (ii) identities of the public school units receiving grants, (iii) identities of public school units that applied for grants but did not receive one, and (iv) the extent to which students participating in after-school robotics programs funded by the grants experienced measurable improvement in academic performance.

Section 1 would appropriate to DPI \$1,670,000 in recurring funds for the 2019-2020 fiscal year to implement the grant program, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year.

Section 2

G.S. 115C-12(23) requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules governing interscholastic athletic activities conducted by local boards of education, including eligibility for student participation.

Part 1 of Article 26 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes governs compulsory attendance. G.S. 115C-379 requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules that are necessary to enforce the compulsory attendance provisions of Part 1 of Article 26.

Section 2 of House Bill 552 would require the State Board of Education to adopt rules that include competitive robotics as an interscholastic athletic activity. Section 2 would also require the State Board of Education to formulate rules about absences that require school principals to authorize excused absences for whenever a student is unable to attend class because of a school-sponsored robotics competition.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Section 1 of this act would become effective July 1, 2019. Section 2 of this act is effective when it becomes law and apply beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.