



HOUSE BILL 259: 2023 Appropriations Act, Sec. 7.22: Increasing Engagement in STEM

2023-2024 General Assembly

Committee:

Introduced by:

Analysis of: Sec. 7.22 of S.L. 2023-134

Date:

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Prepared by:

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OVERVIEW: Section 7.22 of S.L. 2023-134 directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) to establish the Increasing Engagement in STEM Program (Program) for the 2023-2024 fiscal year to provide grant funds to public school units to engage in experiential science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education programs. Recipients must be selected by February 15, 2024. Grant applicants must submit a plan of how the public school unit will use the funds to increase STEM engagement of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students and include information on (i) how the plan will use high-quality instruction methods and research-based best practices in STEM education; (ii) how grant funds will be used; and (iii) how the plan will be sustained beyond the end of the grant period. Grant funds can be used to pay stipends to teachers participating in the Program as well as third-party vendors to provide services or host STEM competitions.

Selection — In selecting recipients for the Program, the Superintendent must determine the size of grant awards given to each public school unit while ensuring a distribution of grant funds to various sized public school units. The following criteria must be followed:

- The total number of grant recipients cannot exceed 20 public school units.
- Recipients must reflect geographic diversity in the State as well as population diversity with (i) up to five public school units consisting of no more than one school; (ii) up to five public school units with an average daily membership of 4,000 or fewer students; (iii) up to five public school units with an average daily membership of 4,001 to 20,000 students; and (iv) up to five public school units with an average daily membership of 20,001 students or greater.

Report — The Superintendent must submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by December 15, 2024, with the following information: (i) lists of the public school units that applied for grants and which ones received them; (ii) summary of how the grant funds were spent on Program activities; (iii) numbers and percentages of students enrolled in the school who participated in the Program with demographic data; (iv) how the public school units would use grant funds if the Program were to be continued; and (v) any recommendations to modify the Program to be more effective.

Evaluation — As a condition of receiving grant funds, a public school unit must designate both students who complete the grant-funded activities in the Common Education Data Analysis and Reporting System and a matched set of students with similar demographic characteristics who did not complete the Program, when possible, in a manner that will allow future analysis of outcomes for the students related to the following: (i) enrollment in STEM-related elective clusters in high school; (ii) graduation from high school within four years of entry; (iii) enrollment in a postsecondary STEM-related major, degree program, or certificate program within three years of high school graduation; (iv) completion of a postsecondary STEM-related major, degree program, or certificate program within six years of

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high school graduation; and (v) employment in a STEM-related field within eight years of high school graduation. The North Carolina Longitudinal Data System, in cooperation with all agencies with relevant data, must report annually to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the outcomes for both groups of students on each available data point beginning December 15, 2028, and ending December 15, 2039.

This section became effective July 1, 2023.