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HOUSE BILL NO. 1064

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 12, 2022

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 4 of Chapter 13 of Title 22.1 a section numbered 22.1-227.2, relating to Public School Trades Incentive Fund and Program; established.

Patrons—Brewer, Simonds and Wilt

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 4 of Chapter 13 of Title 22.1 a section numbered 22.1-227.2 as follows:

§ 22.1-227.2. Public School Trades Incentive Fund and Program.

A. There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Public School Trades Incentive Fund, referred to in this section as "the Fund." The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All funds appropriated for such purpose and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds received on its behalf shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely for the purposes of awarding grants on a competitive basis to school boards pursuant to the Public School Trades Incentive Program established in subsection B. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Superintendent.

B. The Public School Trades Incentive Program (the Program) is established for the purpose of providing grants on a competitive basis from the Fund to any school board that seeks to (i) restore high school programs that teach students skilled trades that lead to earning industry-recognized certifications or credentials or (ii) create or restore middle school programs that encourage and recruit students to participate in high school programs that teach students skilled trades that lead to earning industry-recognized certifications or credentials.

C. The Department shall administer the Program and shall establish such rules and procedures relating to applications and awards as it deems appropriate, provided that the Department considers and gives appropriate weight to the following criteria for grantees:

1. The number of job openings in the geographical area served by the school board for which the desired industry-recognized certifications or credentials would make a certified or credentialed student a competitive candidate;

2. The number of students who will be eligible to enroll in the restored high school programs or the new or restored middle school programs;

3. The socioeconomic status of such eligible students; and

4. The extent to which such programs are made available to students from multiple schools within the local school division or from other local school divisions.

D. Any grantee may use Program funds for equipment, curriculum development, or instructor training.

E. Each grantee shall longitudinally track students who complete any program for which the school board received funds in order to determine the effectiveness of the:

1. New or restored middle school programs in recruiting students to participate in restored high school programs; and

2. Restored high school programs in matching students with high-paying jobs in the fields in which they are certified or credentialed.