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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 222

Offered January 30, 2015

Commending Loudoun County Public Schools.

Patrons—Greason, LaRock, LeMunyon, Minchew, Murphy, Ramadan and Rust

WHEREAS, Loudoun County Public Schools received the 2015 Programs That Work award for its geospatial science program, which allows students to develop critical thinking skills with real-world applications in the geographic information systems field; and

WHEREAS, the Programs That Work awards are presented annually by the Virginia Mathematics and Science Coalition to honor schools and organizations with effective, innovative student or teacher programs that promote the processes and skills associated with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and

WHEREAS, established as a dual enrollment course with James Madison University (JMU) in 2006, the Loudoun County Public Schools geospatial science program was tested extensively over a three-year period; the program expanded to two additional schools in 2009 and was available to seven schools in 2014; and

WHEREAS, students in the program are trained on specialized software and equipment, learn how to create and interpret maps, and analyze data; students examine science and social science questions and study the role of engineers in urban design; and

WHEREAS, at the conclusion of the course, students undertake a month-long final project of their own choosing; the project mirrors authentic activities in the geographic information systems profession, and students present and defend their results before a panel of JMU faculty and fellow students; and

WHEREAS, the innovative program appeals to both gifted students, who appreciate the focus on advanced critical thinking skills, and special needs students, who enjoy the ability to learn and succeed in a project-based environment that reflects real-world contexts; and

WHEREAS, students from Loudoun County Public Schools demonstrated their proficiency in geospatial science at the 2014 Esri International User Conference, where they took first place in a map gallery competition; many students have earned valuable internships as a result of the program; and

WHEREAS, a testament to the success of the program, Loudoun County Public Schools is developing an advanced course for students to take in their junior and senior years of high school, as well as a kindergarten through eighth grade program to begin building students' interest in STEM at a young age; and

WHEREAS, Loudoun County Public Schools and other Programs That Work award recipients from around the Commonwealth received their awards at a formal ceremony in Richmond on January 20, 2015; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Loudoun County Public Schools hereby be commended on receiving the 2015 Programs That Work award for its geospatial science program; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Loudoun County Public Schools as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the school system's ongoing commitment to promoting the importance of science, technology, engineering, and math curriculums for all students.

INTRODUCED

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