

22101874D

HOUSE BILL NO. 128

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 7, 2022

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 2 of Chapter 6 of Title 23.1 a section numbered 23.1-616.1, relating to the establishment of the Virginia Diverse Educator Scholarship Fund and Program.*

 Patron—Davis

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 2 of Chapter 6 of Title 23.1 a section numbered 23.1-616.1 as follows:

§ 23.1-616.1. Virginia Diverse Educator Scholarship Fund and Program.

A. As used in this section:

"Diverse student" means any individual who attended a qualified public elementary or secondary school; is accepted to or enrolled in an education preparation program at a Historically Black College or University; and is eligible for a federal Pell Grant to attend such institution.

"Historically Black College or University" means Hampton University, Norfolk State University, Virginia State University, and Virginia Union University.

"Master teacher" means any experienced teacher at a qualified public elementary or secondary school who is deemed by the relevant school board to be highly effective and able to provide high quality mentorship to diverse students as such students transition into the teaching profession in qualified public elementary or secondary schools.

"Qualified public elementary or secondary school" means a public elementary or secondary school in the Commonwealth in which at least 75 percent of the enrolled students qualify for free or reduced price lunch or are members of families whose income is below the federal poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"Scholarship" means a grant that consists of (i) the amount of funds necessary to cover the cost of (a) tuition, mandatory fees, room and board, and textbooks for a diverse student to attend a Historically Black College or University and (b) teacher licensure fees for a diverse student; (ii) \$5,000 toward teacher professional development activities for a diverse student, including coursework, seminars, and conferences; and (iii) \$10,000 for each master teacher who mentors a diverse student pursuant to subsection F.

B. There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Virginia Diverse Educator Scholarship 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 granting scholarships pursuant to the Virginia Diverse Educator Scholarship Program established pursuant to subsection C. 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 Director of the Council.

C. The Council shall establish the Virginia Diverse Educator Scholarship Program (the Program) for the purpose of annually providing to each Historically Black College or University such sums from the Fund as are necessary for each such institution to provide scholarships on a competitive basis to two diverse students per academic year at each such institution. Each such scholarship may be renewed annually, for a total of up to four academic years, eight semesters, or the equivalent, in accordance with criteria set forth by the Council in regulations.

D. The Council and each Historically Black College or University may establish such other regulations, policies, and guidelines as it deems necessary for the administration of the Program.

E. Each Historically Black College or University shall advertise the Program on the financial aid page or the equivalent page of its website.

F. Each diverse student who is awarded a scholarship pursuant to the Program shall agree in writing to (i) teach in a qualified elementary or secondary school upon graduation for a period that is at least as long as the period during which the diverse student used scholarship funds to attend a

59 *Historically Black College or University and (ii) be mentored by a master teacher during such period of*
60 *employment.*