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**HOUSE BILL NO. 2495****AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**(Proposed by the House Committee on Appropriations  
on February 3, 2023)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Durant)

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-207.8, relating to establishment of Middle School Mathematics Innovation Zone Program.*

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-207.8 as follows:**

**§ 22.1-207.8. Middle School Mathematics Innovation Zone Program established.**

A. The Middle School Mathematics Innovation Zone Program (the Program) is hereby established for the purpose of assisting local school divisions to implement competency-based mathematics education and evidence-based mathematics learning models for students enrolled in grades six, seven, and eight in a public middle school. The Program shall be administered by the Department, and the Department shall, in addition to implementing the design elements and adhering to the requirements and limitations set forth in subsection B, establish such applications, rules, policies, procedures, and processes as it deems necessary or appropriate for the administration of the Program. The Department shall give preference in the provision of assistance pursuant to the Program to schools identified as in need of support.

B. The Program shall consist of the following design elements and shall be subject to the following requirements and limitations:

1. The Department shall establish an application for a school division to designate a public middle school in the school division as a mathematics innovation zone school (innovation zone school) pursuant to the Program. Preference shall be given to so designating public middle schools identified as in need of support, including schools that demonstrate need based on data from the immediately preceding school year on the grades five, six, and seven mathematics Standards of Learning assessments, rural schools, and schools in economically disadvantaged areas;

2. The Department shall establish quality criteria for and approve technical assistance providers to partner with the designated innovation zone school to support professional learning in order to prepare the innovation zone school for the shift toward a competency-based education model;

3. The Department shall establish quality criteria for and approve providers that enable schools to implement personalized competency-based learning (Providers) to coordinate a partnership with innovation zone schools. Providers are responsible for implementation of innovative learning models or competency-based solutions in such innovation zone schools while sharing strategies to improve instructional practice and student outcomes. The Department shall coordinate with each approved Provider to ensure that high-quality competency-based instructional practices are identified and implemented;

4. The Department shall determine a method for collecting evidence in order to validate the student outcomes in innovation zone schools. Approved Providers and innovation zone schools shall collaborate to identify, subject to the approval of the Department, a research organization to independently validate student outcomes in innovation zone schools, consistent with the philosophy of personalized, competency-based learning;

5. The Department may revoke the designation of a middle school as an innovation zone school if the school fails to meet the goals of the Program in the innovation zone school;

6. The Department may revoke the approval of and replace an approved technical assistance provider if the Department determines that such provider has failed to implement the professional learning and requisite support with fidelity or comply with any requirements imposed in this subsection;

7. The Department may revoke the approval of and replace an approved Provider if the Department determines that such Provider has failed to implement the instructional program with fidelity or comply with any requirements imposed in this subsection;

8. The implementation of the personalized, competency-based learning in an innovation zone school shall begin within one year of designation pursuant to the Program, and no such designation shall be made for a period exceeding five years; and

9. Beginning in 2025, each Provider shall issue an annual report to the Department, including information on the implementation quality and student outcomes.