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HOUSE BILL NO. 625

Offered January 10, 2024

Prefiled January 9, 2024

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-199.7 of the Code of Virginia, relating to public education; community schools; Office of Community Schools at Department of Education; Community School Development and Implementation Planning Grant; Community School Coordinator Program; state goal.

Patrons—Rasoul, Cousins, Glass, Keys-Gamarra and Tran; Senator: Aird

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-199.7 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-199.7. Community schools; interagency task force; Office of Community Schools at the Department; Community School Development and Implementation Planning Grant; Community School Coordinator Program; state goal.

A. As used in this section:

"Identified student" and "identified student percentage" have the same meanings as provided in § 22.1-207.4:1.

"Office" means the Office of Community Schools.

B. In order to remove nonacademic barriers to learning as a means to enhance student academic success in public elementary and secondary schools throughout the Commonwealth, the Department of Education shall establish an interagency task force composed of state and local agencies and entities in the areas of early childhood development, health, social services, community engagement, family engagement, higher education, communities in schools, and workforce development for the purpose of (i) developing a program for the establishment of community schools whereby public elementary and secondary schools serve as centers for the provision of such community programs and services to students and their families as may be necessary on the basis of unique needs of the student population to be served and (ii) developing and providing to the Governor, the Secretary of Education, local school boards, and other interested state, local, and private entities policy recommendations relating to the coordinated delivery of community services to students and their families and the operation of community schools throughout the Commonwealth in accordance with the Virginia Community School Framework.

B. C. The community schools program established pursuant to subsection A B shall include a process by which school boards and community partnerships consisting of school boards and other community and service providers may apply to the Department of Education to designate an elementary or secondary school in the local school division as a community school. The application process shall include requirements for applicants to provide a plan for the sustainability of the community school and for the measurement of the success and effectiveness of the community school. The Department of Education shall consult with the interagency task force established pursuant to subsection A B in the selection of applications and the designation of community schools.

D. The Department shall establish the Office of Community Schools as an office within the Department with at least five full-time equivalent positions for the purpose of supporting the development and growth of community schools throughout the Commonwealth in accordance with the Virginia Community School Framework by collaborating with the interagency task force established pursuant to subsection B; administering state funds provided to school divisions to develop and sustain community school models; assisting school leaders in the application for federal grant funds for their community school models; and providing technical assistance to school personnel and contracted coordinators regarding effective practices and models for community schools and capital considerations relating to community schools, including site acquisition and building construction, renovations, and additions.

E. The Office shall establish and administer the Community School Development and Implementation Planning Grant for the purpose of providing grants to school boards that seek to designate any school within the local school division as a community school to assist with the planning and implementation of such designation. In administering and awarding such funding pursuant to such planning grant, the Office shall offer such funding to applicants for any public elementary or secondary school that is in the top 20 percent of public elementary or secondary schools in the Commonwealth for highest identified student percentage based on data from the immediately preceding school year.

INTRODUCED

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59 *F. The Office shall establish and administer the Community School Coordinator Program for the*
60 *purpose of providing funding to school boards that previously completed a planning grant pursuant to*
61 *subsection E and now seek to employ or hire through contracted services with a qualified nonprofit*
62 *organization a community school coordinator to oversee any community school designated in the local*
63 *school division. The funding shall be made available to applicants for a coordinator position for a*
64 *community school that is in the top 20 percent of public elementary or secondary schools in the*
65 *Commonwealth for highest identified student percentage based on data from the immediately preceding*
66 *school year or was qualified at the time of the planning grant. Awards shall consist of (i) funds*
67 *sufficient to hire a community school coordinator at a rate equivalent to the average Standards of*
68 *Quality cost of a secondary teacher and (ii) a per-student amount to cover community school*
69 *programming, capital, and operations costs at a minimum rate of 16.5 percent of per-pupil basic aid for*
70 *the fiscal year. Any community school coordinator hired with funds pursuant to such program shall be*
71 *considered a Standards of Quality-funded position that is subject to local match requirements under the*
72 *composite index of local ability-to-pay. The per-student portion of each award shall not be subject to*
73 *any local match requirement.*

74 *G. In recognition of the ability of community schools to properly meet the full spectrum of identified*
75 *student needs in certain communities, it is the goal of the Commonwealth to prioritize funding for the*
76 *initiatives and grant programs established in this section to enable their expansion to serve the top 33*
77 *percent of public elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth for highest identified student*
78 *percentage based on data from the immediately preceding school year.*