

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 552
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/9/19

Short Title: After-School Robotics Grants/Athletics.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 3, 2019

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN EDUCATIONAL AND COMPETITIVE AFTER-SCHOOL
3 ROBOTICS GRANT PROGRAM, TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
4 TO ADOPT RULES FOR COMPETITIVE ROBOTICS, AND TO PERMIT EXCUSED
5 ABSENCES FOR COMPETITIVE ROBOTICS.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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8 **PART I. EDUCATIONAL AND COMPETITIVE AFTER-SCHOOL ROBOTICS**
9 **GRANT PROGRAM**

10 SECTION 1.(a) Part 2B of Article 8 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is
11 amended by adding a new section to read:

12 "**§ 115C-102.9. Educational and competitive after-school robotics grant program.**

13 (a) Definitions. – The following definitions shall apply in this section:

14 (1) Public school unit. – A local school administrative unit, charter school,
15 regional school, innovative school, or laboratory school.

16 (2) Robotics partner. – A third-party entity, such as a nonprofit organization or
17 institution of higher education, approved by the Department of Public
18 Instruction, that is able to provide adequate support for an after-school
19 robotics program. In order to provide adequate support, a robotics partner
20 must meet at least all of the following criteria:

21 a. Have a national presence in robotics education and competition.

22 b. Provide adequate instruction and programming for students and adult
23 volunteers in (i) robotics education, (ii) project-based learning, and
24 (iii) competitive robotics.

25 c. Promote a safe and equitable social environment.

26 (b) Program; Purpose. – There is established the Educational and Competitive
27 After-School Robotics Grant Program (Program). The purpose of the Program shall be to (i)
28 promote evidence-based, after-school programs for robotics education and competition and (ii)
29 motivate students to pursue education and career opportunities in science, technology,
30 engineering, and mathematics while building critical life and work-related skills.

31 (c) Eligibility. – Any public school unit is eligible to apply to the Department of Public
32 Instruction for a grant to develop an educational and competitive after-school robotics program
33 with a robotics partner.

34 (d) Applications; Criteria and Guidelines. – No later than August 1 of each year that funds
35 are made available, the Department shall develop and publish criteria and guidelines for the
36 application process for the Program in the upcoming school year, including any documentation



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1 required to be submitted by the applicants. The Department shall accept applications until
2 September 30 of each school year. Applications shall include, at a minimum, the following
3 information:

4 (1) Evidence that the applicant has or will be able to establish a relationship with
5 a robotics partner.

6 (2) A proposed budget for the educational and competitive after-school robotics
7 program.

8 (e) Award and Use of Funds. – From funds made available for the Program, the
9 Department shall award grants to the selected applicants by October 31 of each school year.
10 Funds may be used for any of the following purposes:

11 (1) Establishing a relationship with a robotics partner.

12 (2) Purchasing robotics kits.

13 (3) Providing stipends for coaches.

14 (4) Making payments associated with participation in a robotics league or robotics
15 competition.

16 (5) Paying fees incurred as part of the administration of a robotics team.

17 (f) Reporting. – No later than July 15, 2020, and annually thereafter, the Department
18 shall report the following information from the prior school year to the Joint Legislative
19 Education Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division:

20 (1) Number and amounts of grants awarded.

21 (2) Identities of the public school units receiving grants.

22 (3) Identities of public school units that applied for grants but did not receive one.

23 (4) The extent to which students participating in after-school robotics programs
24 funded by the Program experienced measurable improvement in academic
25 performance, if any."

26 **SECTION 1.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
27 Public Instruction the sum of one million six hundred seventy thousand dollars (\$1,670,000) in
28 recurring funds for the 2019-2020 fiscal year to implement the Educational and Competitive
29 After-School Robotics Grant Program described in this section, beginning in the 2019-2020
30 school year.

31 32 **PART II. TREAT COMPETITIVE ROBOTICS AS AN INTERSCHOLASTIC** 33 **ATHLETIC ACTIVITY**

34 **SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 115C-12(23) reads as rewritten:

35 "(23) Power to Adopt Eligibility Rules for Interscholastic Athletic Competition. –
36 The State Board of Education shall adopt rules governing interscholastic
37 athletic activities conducted by local boards of education, including eligibility
38 for student participation. Those rules shall include competitive robotics as an
39 interscholastic athletic activity. With regard to middle schools and high
40 schools, the rules shall provide for the following:

41 a. All coaches, school nurses, athletic directors, first responders,
42 volunteers, students who participate in interscholastic athletic
43 activities, and the parents of those students shall receive, on an annual
44 basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet. School
45 employees, first responders, volunteers, and students must sign the
46 sheet and return it to the coach before they can participate in
47 interscholastic athletic activities, including tryouts, practices, or
48 competition. Parents must sign the sheet and return it to the coach
49 before their children can participate in any such interscholastic athletic
50 activities. The signed sheets shall be maintained in accordance with
51 sub-subdivision d. of this subdivision.

1 For the purpose of this subdivision, a concussion is a traumatic
 2 brain injury caused by a direct or indirect impact to the head that
 3 results in disruption of normal brain function, which may or may not
 4 result in loss of consciousness.

5 b. If a student participating in an interscholastic athletic activity exhibits
 6 signs or symptoms consistent with concussion, the student shall be
 7 removed from the activity at that time and shall not be allowed to
 8 return to play or practice that day. The student shall not return to play
 9 or practice on a subsequent day until the student is evaluated by and
 10 receives written clearance for such participation from (i) a physician
 11 licensed under Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes with
 12 training in concussion management, (ii) a neuropsychologist licensed
 13 under Article 18A of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes with training
 14 in concussion management and working in consultation with a
 15 physician licensed under Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the General
 16 Statutes, (iii) an athletic trainer licensed under Article 34 of Chapter
 17 90 of the General Statutes, (iv) a physician assistant, consistent with
 18 the limitations of G.S. 90-18.1, or (v) a nurse practitioner, consistent
 19 with the limitations of G.S. 90-18.2.

20 c. Each school shall develop a venue specific emergency action plan to
 21 deal with serious injuries and acute medical conditions in which the
 22 condition of the patient may deteriorate rapidly. The plan shall include
 23 a delineation of roles, methods of communication, available
 24 emergency equipment, and access to and plan for emergency transport.
 25 This plan must be (i) in writing, (ii) reviewed by an athletic trainer
 26 licensed in North Carolina, (iii) approved by the principal of the
 27 school, (iv) distributed to all appropriate personnel, (v) posted
 28 conspicuously at all venues, and (vi) reviewed and rehearsed annually
 29 by all licensed athletic trainers, first responders, coaches, school
 30 nurses, athletic directors, and volunteers for interscholastic athletic
 31 activities.

32 d. Each school shall maintain complete and accurate records of its
 33 compliance with the requirements of this subdivision pertaining to
 34 head injuries.

35 The State Board of Education may authorize a designated organization to
 36 apply and enforce the Board's rules governing participation in interscholastic
 37 athletic activities at the high school level."

38 **SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 115C-379 reads as rewritten:

39 **"§ 115C-379. Method of enforcement.**

40 (a) It shall be the duty of the State Board of Education to formulate the rules that may be
 41 necessary for the proper enforcement of the provisions of this Part. The Board shall prescribe (i)
 42 what shall constitute unlawful absence, (ii) what causes may constitute legitimate excuses for
 43 temporary nonattendance due to a student's physical or mental inability to attend or a student's
 44 participation in a valid educational opportunity such as service as a legislative page or a
 45 Governor's page, and (iii) under what circumstances teachers, principals, or superintendents may
 46 excuse pupils for nonattendance due to immediate demands of the farm or the home in certain
 47 seasons of the year in the several sections of the State.

48 (b) The rules shall require school principals to authorize excused absences as follows:

49 (1) a-A minimum of two excused absences each academic year for religious
 50 observances required by the faith of a student or the student's ~~parents-parent,~~
 51 guardian, or legal custodian.

1 (2) Whenever a student is unable to attend class because of a school-sponsored
2 robotics competition.

3 The rules may require that the student's ~~parents give parent, guardian, or custodian gives the~~
4 principal written notice of the request for an excused absence a reasonable time prior to the
5 ~~religious observance event.~~ The student shall be given the opportunity to make up any tests or
6 other work missed due to an excused absence ~~for a religious observance.~~ approved in accordance
7 with this subsection.

8 (c) It shall be the duty of all school officials to carry out such instructions from the State
9 Board of Education, and any school official failing to carry out such instructions shall be guilty
10 of a Class 3 misdemeanor: Provided, that the compulsory attendance law herein prescribed shall
11 not be in force in any local school administrative unit that has a higher compulsory attendance
12 feature than that provided herein."

13 **PART III. EFFECTIVE DATE**

14 **SECTION 3.** Section 1 of this act becomes effective July 1, 2019. Section 2 of this
15 act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.
16 Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.
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