

1 SB118  
2 155779-2  
3 By Senator Orr  
4 RFD: Education  
5 First Read: 14-JAN-14

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8 SYNOPSIS: This bill would authorize the State  
9 Department of Education, pending available funds,  
10 to offer competitive two-year start-up grants to  
11 public schools for the purpose of developing new  
12 educational programs for gifted or talented  
13 children.

14  
15 A BILL  
16 TO BE ENTITLED  
17 AN ACT

18  
19 Relating to education; to provide findings of the  
20 Legislature relating to public education; to authorize the  
21 State Department of Education, pending available funds, to  
22 offer certain start-up grants to public schools for the  
23 purpose of developing new advanced educational and specialized  
24 programs for gifted or talented children; to require the  
25 department to adopt rules providing for the evaluation of  
26 applications for grants; to provide public access to applicant  
27 scoring; and to define a term.

1 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

2 Section 1. The Legislature finds and declares the  
3 following:

4 (1) It is vital that Alabama's public schools  
5 challenge and encourage students who are capable of completing  
6 accelerated academic work.

7 (2) Programs to encourage accelerated students can  
8 often be maintained by schools, after an initial start cost,  
9 with funding roughly equivalent to what they currently  
10 receive.

11 (3) This state should encourage schools to develop  
12 and implement gifted and talented student programs to provide  
13 options for students capable of doing advanced class work.

14 Section 2. (a) The State Department of Education  
15 shall award available start-up grants to public schools for  
16 the purpose of initiating new programs to offer advanced and  
17 specialized educational services to gifted or talented  
18 children. The number of schools receiving grants under this  
19 section shall be determined based upon funds available to the  
20 department during a fiscal year.

21 (1) A start-up grant shall be made for a single  
22 year, with the rebuttable presumption that the grant will be  
23 renewed for a single additional year contingent upon available  
24 funding.

25 (2) Grants shall be awarded upon consideration of  
26 all of the following criteria:

1           a. Grants should be awarded to programs that offer  
2 educational services specifically targeted at gifted or  
3 talented children.

4           b. The quality of the proposed curriculum,  
5 qualifications of persons acting as instructors, and  
6 integration with the infrastructure of the school must be a  
7 primary consideration.

8           c. Preference must be given to programs that are  
9 offered during the traditional school day or, alternatively,  
10 to programs that provide after-school transportation.

11           d. Preference must be given to programs that  
12 explicitly provide for the encouragement of participation by  
13 students from traditionally underserved populations.

14           e. All programs awarded grants pursuant to this act  
15 must provide a means for assessing the impact of the program  
16 on participating students' academic growth.

17           (b) The department shall adopt rules providing an  
18 explicit formula for evaluating proposals for grants awarded  
19 under this section. The scoring of grant applications shall be  
20 considered public information.

21           (c) For the purposes of this section, "gifted or  
22 talented children" shall mean children who are age four  
23 through the age of 19 or children who receive a regular high  
24 school diploma, whichever occurs first, who, by virtue of  
25 certain outstanding abilities, are capable of a high level of  
26 performance in an identified field. The term includes children  
27 identified by professionally qualified persons who may require

1 differentiated educational programs or services beyond those  
2 normally provided by the regular school program in order to  
3 realize those children's full contribution to self and  
4 society. The term also includes children who have demonstrated  
5 achievement or potential ability in any of the following  
6 areas, singularly or in combination:

7 (1) General intellectual ability.

8 (2) Specific academic aptitude.

9 (3) Creative or productive thinking.

10 (4) Leadership ability.

11 (5) Visual and performing arts ability.

12 (6) Psychomotor ability.

13 (d) In the implementation and administration of this  
14 act, the State Department of Education shall comply with the  
15 guidelines and innovative practices set forth in Chapter 39,  
16 Title 16, Code of Alabama 1975.

17 (e) Any funds designated for grants under this  
18 section may not affect other funding by the Legislature from  
19 any source for programs earmarked for the benefit of gifted or  
20 talented children.

21 Section 3. This act shall become effective on the  
22 first day of the third month following its passage and  
23 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.