**A** **JOINT RESOLUTION**

TO RESTORE TEACHER STEP INCREASES THAT WERE SUSPENDED BY ACT 135 OF 2020 DUE TO FINANCIAL UNCERTAINTIES CAUSED BY THE COVID‑19 VIRUS, BY APPROPRIATING FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS TO PROVIDE FOR TEACHER STEP INCREASES FOR THE 2020‑2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. (A) From the 2018‑2019 Contingency Reserve Fund, and notwithstanding Act 135 of 2020, Part II, Section (4)(D), there is appropriated $50,000,000 to the Executive Budget Office to provide teacher step increases for the 2020‑2021 School Year in accordance with Act 91 of 2019, Part 1.B. Proviso 1.A.36. The funds must be held in a separate account and disbursed to school districts in accordance with subsection (B). Any funds remaining in the account after June 30, 2021, must be remitted to the Contingency Reserve Fund.

(B)(1) The Executive Budget Office shall distribute the funds to each school district in an amount, determined by the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, equal to the increased cost of salaries to the school district due to the step increase in the state minimum salary schedule.

(2) The Department of Education shall provide the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office the number of full‑time equivalent state‑funded positions that were eligible for the step increase pursuant to Section 59‑20‑50(4)(b) in school years 2018‑2019, 2019‑2020, and 2020‑2021 that each district has in each cell of the state minimum teacher salary schedule. For school years 2018‑2019 and 2019‑2020, the department shall provide the number of positions as of the end of the school year. For School Year 2020‑2021, the department shall provide the number of positions as of February 1, 2021.

(3) The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office shall determine the actual increased cost of the step increase in the state minimum salary schedule by determining the increase in the amount of total salaries of such positions in School Year 2020‑2021 when compared to School Year 2019‑2020 due to the change in the average number of years of service for such positions. The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office shall notify the Executive Budget Office and the Department of Education of its determination for each school district. Then, the Executive Budget Office shall distribute the cumulative amount to the Department of Education to be distributed to each school district that experienced an increase in the manner determined by the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office.

(C) For each position that is eligible for the step increase for the 2020‑2021 School Year, each school district shall provide a one‑time lump sum payment of the entire step increase due to the employee, including any amounts in arrears, by June 15, 2021.

SECTION 2. This joint resolution takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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