

1 SB114  
2 164544-1  
3 By Senator Orr  
4 RFD: Finance and Taxation Education  
5 First Read: 03-MAR-15

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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 grants to public  
11 schools for the purpose of developing new  
12 educational programs or continuing existing  
13 educational programs for gifted or talented  
14 children.

15  
16 A BILL  
17 TO BE ENTITLED  
18 AN ACT

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

1 require local boards of education to match awarded grant  
2 funds.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

4 Section 1. The Legislature finds and declares the  
5 following:

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

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

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

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

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

26 (2) Grants shall be awarded upon consideration of  
27 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 (f) The appropriate local board of education shall  
22 match any grant funds awarded by the department under this  
23 act.

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