

HOUSE BILL NO. 357

INTRODUCED BY E. TILLEMAN, J. ISALY, P. ELVERUM, M. BERTOGLIO, K. WALSH, R. MINER, G.

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING EDUCATIONAL LAWS TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN THE MIDDLE GRADES; REQUIRING THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION TO ADOPT RULES FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FUNDS; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; AND PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION."

WHEREAS, the academic requirements for junior high schools, middle schools, and 7th and 8th grade programs contained in the accreditation standards of the Board of Public Education include "career and technical education courses or pathways such as agriculture, business education, family and consumer sciences, health occupations and industrial technology education"; and

WHEREAS, high schools receive additional state funding that recognizes the unique costs of maintaining high-quality career and technical education pathways; and

WHEREAS, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of providing high-quality career and technical education, including career exposure and exploration, to students in the middle grades; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Public Instruction has utilized the increased flexibility under Perkins V and Montana's Perkins Plan to provide modest \$5,000 Perkins Secondary Reserve Grants limited to small schools on a first-come, first-served basis; and

WHEREAS, a long-overdue state investment to support middle grades career and technical education could enhance the Perkins Secondary Reserve Grants and allow larger schools to participate as well.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Funding for career and technical education programs in middle grades. (1) The superintendent of public instruction shall annually distribute money from the appropriation for middle grades career and technical education. The money must be allocated to elementary and K-12 school

districts with accredited and approved junior high, middle school, or 7th and 8th grade programs.

(2) The superintendent of public instruction shall by rule prescribe the method for distribution, the form of the application, budget procedures, and accounting rules for the funds. The legislature intends that the state money be used to enhance distributions of federal funding under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 to support middle grades career and technical education in line with the plan developed under 20-7-330, except that the state money may not be limited by school size and that the distribution method adopted by the superintendent of public instruction be equitable. The superintendent of public instruction may prescribe other requirements for the receipt of funding consistent with Title 20, chapter 7, part 3.

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation. (1) There is appropriated ~~\$100,000~~ \$240,000 from the general fund to the office of public instruction for fiscal year 2027 for middle grades career and technical education as described in [section 1].

(2) The legislature intends that the appropriation in this section be considered part of the ongoing base for the next legislative session.

NEW SECTION. Section 3. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 20, chapter 7, part 3, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 7, part 3, apply to [section 1].

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