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**HOUSE BILL 1453**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Blake, Lytton, Chandler, Kretz, Hayes, Haler, Tarleton, Stanford, and Santos

AN ACT Relating to agriculture science education in public schools; adding new sections to chapter 28A.188 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature recognizes that the agriculture sector is one of the largest in the state, and that maintaining the productivity and vitality this important sector requires educational investments in public schools and a workforce with the relevant skills that employers need to be successful in a competitive global marketplace.

(2) The legislature recognizes also that science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs are critical components of the public school curriculum and that student opportunities to access applicable courses, especially when they include opportunities for meaningful interactions with employers and community members, give students knowledge and skills that will benefit them as they transition to postsecondary careers and education.

(3) The legislature acknowledges that some public schools in Washington have successfully implemented a curriculum for agriculture science education, a STEM-based curriculum developed with the assistance of teachers and agriculture professionals at the national level, but that necessary instructor training and equipment costs have been barriers to a wider implementation of the curriculum.

(4) The legislature, therefore, intends to promote:

(a) An interdisciplinary curriculum for agriculture science education with a strong focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics;

(b) Appropriate and effective professional development opportunities for teachers using a curriculum for agriculture science education;

(c) Funding options for consumable and nonconsumable laboratory purchases necessary to fully implement a curriculum for agriculture science education;

(d) Active partnerships between high schools successfully using a curriculum for agriculture science education and those in the initial stages of creating a curriculum for agriculture science education; and

(e) Active partnerships with businesses and the local community to connect learning beyond the classroom.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.188 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the superintendent of public instruction shall designate one or more high schools to serve as resources and examples of how to combine:

(a) An interdisciplinary curriculum for agriculture science education with a strong focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and

(b) Active partnerships with businesses and the local community to connect learning beyond the classroom.

(2) The designated high school or schools shall serve as lighthouse programs and provide technical assistance and advice to other schools and communities in the initial stages of creating a curriculum for agriculture science education. The designated schools must have proven experience with the curriculum and a willingness to serve as a model program.

(3) In addition, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall work with the designated high school or schools to: (a) Publicize the models of best practices in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics instruction used by the designated schools; and (b) encourage other schools and communities to work with the designated schools to replicate similar models.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.188 RCW to read as follows:

The curriculum for agriculture science education lighthouse account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. The purpose of the account is to support schools designated as lighthouse schools under section 2 of this act to serve as resources to other schools and communities interested in replicating similar models. Revenues to the account may include gifts from the private sector, federal funds, any appropriations made by the state legislature, or revenues from other sources. Grants to the designated lighthouse schools and their administration must be paid from the account. Only the superintendent of public instruction or the superintendent's designee may authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.188 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of funds for this specific purpose, the agriculture science education grant program is created.

(2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall establish and publish funding criteria for agriculture science education equipment and professional development grants to school districts. The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in establishing the funding criteria, must solicit and consider comments from members of the public and from persons with relevant educational and agricultural expertise.

(3) Eligible uses of the grants include, but are not limited to:

(a) Professional development for certificated instructors implementing a curriculum for an agriculture science education program;

(b) Consumable laboratory equipment supplies needed for the adoption or continuation of agriculture science education curricula;

(c) Equipment commonly used in the agricultural industry with sensors that register scientific data, including, but not limited to, carbon dioxide levels, soil moisture, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity; and

(d) Administrative costs directly attributable to the adoption or continuation of agriculture science education curricula.

(4)(a) Grants awarded in accordance with subsection (3)(a) of this section may not exceed three thousand dollars per instructor per school year. Grants awarded in accordance with subsection (3)(b) through (d) of this section may not exceed fifteen thousand dollars per school district per school year.

(b) Recipients of grants awarded under this section may reapply for subsequent grants from the agriculture science education grant program.

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