

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 482

Short Title: Animal Support/Enrichment Prg. for Students. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Elmore, K. Hall, K. Baker, and Dixon (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 5, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM FOR INNOVATIVE SCHOOL-BASED
SUPPORT PROGRAMS INTEGRATING ANIMALS INTO SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS AND STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Program Established. – Within the funds made available pursuant to Section 3 of this act, the Outdoor Heritage Advisory Council shall establish a grant program for the purpose of creating innovative school-based support programs for students integrating the use of animals as an outlet for positive mental health and behavioral learning opportunities. A local school administrative unit may apply for a grant to have one or more of its schools offer a program to students in which animals are used in various ways to enhance school-based services, such as in developing emotional support therapy relationships, behavioral modification therapy, career and technical education programs for increased student responsibility and accountability, and increasing overall student engagement.

SECTION 2. Grant Program Criteria; Awards. – The Outdoor Heritage Advisory Council (OHAC) shall select local school administrative units for the award of grants for programs that serve students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Grant programs shall focus on serving at-risk students or students with disabilities but may also broaden participation for all students in the programs. Grant programs may incorporate a wide range of animal species, including small animals, such as dogs, or large animals, such as livestock, depending on the type of program offered by the local school administrative unit. OHAC may consult with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services when evaluating a grant program for selection.

Grant recipients are eligible to receive grants in an amount of up to three thousand dollars (\$3,000).

SECTION 3. Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Wildlife Resources Commission the sum of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year to be allocated to the Outdoor Heritage Advisory Council to provide grants to local school administrative units in accordance with this act.

SECTION 4. Report. – Grant recipients shall report to the Outdoor Heritage Advisory Council for the year in which grant funds were expended on the implementation of the grant program, including data collection for reporting on student outcomes, including impacts of the program, and use of State funds. Beginning February 15, 2022, OHAC shall provide an



- 1 annual report on the grant program to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee,
2 including the results of the program and recommendations regarding effective program models.
3 **SECTION 5.** Effective Date. – This act becomes effective July 1, 2021.