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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 251 (Substitute S-1 as reported by the Committee of the Whole)
Sponsor: Senator Dick Posthumus
Committee: Education

CONTENT

The bill would amend the School Code to permit a school district, beginning with pupils scheduled to graduate in 1997, to use a locally adopted and State-approved basic proficiency test to determine pupil eligibility for a State endorsement. (Under current law, a district must use a State-developed or -selected assessment instrument beginning with 1997 graduates.) The Department of Education could not approve a locally adopted basic proficiency test unless the Department determined that the test was at least as rigorous in measuring academic achievement as the assessment instrument developed and approved by the State Board. A district could offer an assessment instrument to any pupil in grade nine or higher. The bill also would repeal provisions in the State School Aid Act that require a school district, in order to receive State aid in 1993-94, 1994-95, and 1995-96, to award a State-endorsed high school diploma.

MCL 380.1279

Legislative Analyst: L. Arasim

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State government. Currently, for students scheduled to graduate in 1994, 1995, and 1996, local school districts may use the results from the MEAP tests or the results of a locally adopted and State-approved proficiency test to determine eligibility for State endorsement of a high school diploma. According to the Michigan Department of Education (MDOE), all but 24 local school districts have chosen to use the MEAP tests. The costs associated with developing and administering the MEAP tests currently are appropriated in the annual budget for the MDOE. The estimated cost for developing and administering the MEAP tests in FY 1994-95 is \$1.7 million. This cost is estimated to increase to \$2.7 million in FY 1995-96. Local school districts that choose to use locally adopted and State-approved basic proficiency tests to determine eligibility for State endorsement pay the full costs for developing and administering these tests from their individual budgets. Beginning with students graduating in 1997, the State will use assessment instruments developed and approved by the State Board of Education to determine eligibility for State endorsement of high school diplomas. School districts no longer will use the MEAP tests to determine eligibility for endorsement; rather, they will use the Michigan High School Proficiency Test. The costs of developing and administering this test would continue to be paid by the MDOE. In FY 1994-95, \$1.5 million is appropriated to MDOE for developing and administering the proficiency test and an estimated \$2.9 million is recommended in the Governor's FY 1994-95 Executive budget. Schools choosing to continue to use locally adopted and State-approved tests would continue to pay the full cost for these tests from their individual budgets. The proposed repeal of Section 104a of the School Aid Act would mean that local school districts would no longer have State school aid payments withheld for failure to award endorsed diplomas. However, the School Code still would require that local school districts award State-endorsed high school diplomas.

Date Completed: 2-28-95

Fiscal Analyst: J. Carrasco

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