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Senate Bill 757 (as enacted)
Sponsor: Senator Roger Kahn, M.D.
Senate Committee: Education
House Committee: Education

PUBLIC ACT 80 of 2010

Date Completed: 5-24-10

RATIONALE

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides \$4.35 billion to support the Race to the Top Fund. Money in the Fund is to be distributed to states that adopt education reforms meeting certain requirements. To qualify for a Race to the Top (RTTT) grant, a state must demonstrate, among other things, that it has made progress in improving teacher effectiveness, improving academic content standards and student achievement standards, and supporting struggling schools. In 2009, the Michigan Legislature passed a package of bills to help meet those requirements, and the Governor signed the bills into law on January 4, 2010. While the State did not receive funding in the first round of grant awards, the Department of Education is planning to submit a revised application for the second round. The application deadline is June 1, 2010.

It was suggested that additional measures could help to improve the State's chances of receiving an RTTT grant. Specifically, some believed that the process for developing an educational development plan for each pupil needed to be revised to prepare students better for success in high school and in their chosen careers.

In a separate matter, there was some concern that the math requirements under the Michigan Merit Standard did not provide enough flexibility for students who may struggle with algebra II. It was suggested that the Michigan Merit Standard should permit pupils to take statistics or data analysis as a replacement for algebra II.

CONTENT

The bill amends the Revised School Code to do the following:

- **Require each pupil to review his or her educational development plan (EDP) in 8th grade and revise the plan as appropriate before entering high school.**
- **Permit a pupil to receive a high school diploma under a personal curriculum by successfully completing one semester of statistics or functions and data analysis, as an alternative to algebra II.**

The bill will take effect on July 1, 2011.

Educational Development Plan

The Code requires the board of a school district or public school academy (PSA) to ensure that each pupil has the opportunity in 7th grade to develop an EDP, and that each pupil has developed an EDP before he or she begins high school.

Under the bill, instead, the board of a school district or PSA must provide the opportunity for each pupil to develop an EDP during 7th grade, and ensure that each pupil reviews the plan during 8th grade and revises it as appropriate before beginning high school.

The Code requires that an EDP be developed by the pupil under the supervision of his or her school counselor or other designee who is qualified to act in a counseling role and is selected by the high school principal. The plan must be based on a career pathways

program or similar career exploration program. Under the bill, the plan also must be based on high school readiness scores, and must be designed to assist pupils to identify career development goals as they relate to academic requirements.

The Code states that if a pupil receives special education services, a school psychologist also should participate in developing the pupil's educational development plan. The bill deletes that provision.

Math Credit Requirement

Under the Code, the board of a school district or public school academy may not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless he or she meets the credit requirements of the Michigan Merit Standard, which include at least four credits in math, including algebra I, geometry, and algebra II, or an integrated sequence of that course content that consists of three credits.

The Code permits the parent, legal guardian, teacher, or school counselor of a pupil who has completed grade 9 to request a personal curriculum for the pupil that modifies some of the Michigan Merit Standard credit requirements. A pupil who completes the requirements of a personal curriculum may be awarded a high school diploma even if the personal curriculum does not meet all of the requirements of the Michigan Merit Standard. The algebra II requirement may be modified if the pupil meets one or more of the following:

- Successfully completes the same content as one semester of algebra II.
- Successfully completes the same content as algebra II over two years, with a credit awarded for each year.
- Successfully completes the same content as one semester of algebra II as part of a formal career and technical education program or curriculum.

Under the bill, the algebra II requirement also may be modified if the pupil successfully completes one semester of statistics or functions and data analysis.

Under the Code, the math credit requirements may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the pupil successfully completes at least 3-½ credits

of the required math credits before completing high school. The bill requires those math credits to include algebra I and geometry.

The Code allows the math credit requirements to be modified only after the pupil has completed (but not necessarily passed) at least 1-½ credits of the required math credits. The bill deletes that provision.

MCL 380.1278b

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

Public schools today offer a wide variety of courses that can help pupils develop the skills to be successful in their chosen careers. To take full advantage of the available options, a pupil should develop some sense of what he or she would like to do once leaving school. Specific goals can have a profound impact on the path that a student takes through high school and beyond. The function of an educational development plan is to help the pupil think about the options and identify courses that will allow him or her to achieve those career goals.

The process of developing an educational development plan gives the student a chance to consult with teachers, counselors, and other adults to determine the right mix of courses to match his or her goals and interests. Individual planning in the 7th and 8th grades can help a pupil succeed in high school. The bill will make that process more effective, by giving a pupil the opportunity to revise the plan as necessary to reflect changing circumstances, including academic performance and evolving interests.

In addition, the bill might enhance the State's application for RTTT funding in the second round of grants. The eligibility criteria include a requirement that a state demonstrate that it is taking steps to implement high-quality standards and assessments and support students in the transition to those standards and assessments. Michigan has done that in a number of ways, including enactment of the Michigan Merit Standard, which requires all

public high school pupils to complete certain credit requirements in order to receive a high school diploma. The bill will help ensure that each pupil is prepared to meet that challenge successfully.

Response: The bill imposes additional costs on school districts without providing resources for them to review each pupil's educational development plan.

Supporting Argument

While the Michigan Merit Standard sets a high bar for each public high school graduate in the State, the math requirements may act as an unnecessary barrier to graduation for pupils who may have difficulty successfully completing algebra II. The Code permits a pupil to complete the algebra II content over two years or to learn the content as part of a career and technical education course or program, which may help some students master the material. Some students, however, still may see the course as an insurmountable hurdle, and additional options are needed for those students. Statistics and data analysis are business-related topics that might be more appropriate for some students and more directly relevant to their career goals. The bill permits a student to opt to take one of those courses rather than algebra II if approved under a personal curriculum, maintaining a high standard for all students while providing additional flexibility for some on an individual basis.

Legislative Analyst: Curtis Walker

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill will have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Kathryn Summers

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.