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BILL



ANALYSIS

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House Bill 5659 (Substitute H-1 as passed by the House)
Sponsor: Representative Ken Yonker
House Committee: Education
Senate Committee: Education

Date Completed: 11-27-12

CONTENT

The bill would repeal Section 1280 of the Revised School Code, which provides for school accreditation, and would amend the Code to delete references to that section.

Section 1280

Section 1280 requires the board of a school district to ensure that each school within the district is accredited if the board does not want to be subject to various measures. A school is accredited if it is certified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (the State Superintendent) as having met or exceeded standards established for six areas of school operation: administration and school organization; curricula; staff; school plant and facilities; school and community relations; and school improvement plans and student performance.

Section 1280 provides for the development and distribution to schools of accreditation standards, as well as standards for summary accreditation. The standards' criteria must include pupil performance on Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) tests and on the Michigan Merit Exam, as well as multiple-year change in pupil performance.

If a school has met the standards for summary accreditation, it is considered accredited without a full building-level evaluation.

If a school has not met the standards for summary accreditation, or for accreditation based on a full building-level evaluation, but is making progress toward meeting the standards, the school is in interim status and is subject to a full building-level evaluation. If a school has not met the standards for summary accreditation and is not eligible for interim status, it is unaccredited.

A high school may not be accredited unless the Department of Education determines that it is providing, or has otherwise ensured that all pupils have access to, all of the elements of the curriculum required under the Code for a high school diploma.

A school that has been unaccredited for three consecutive years is subject to one or more of the following measures, as determined by the State Superintendent:

- The State Superintendent or his or her designee must appoint an administrator for the school until it becomes accredited, at the district's expense.
- A parent or guardian of a child who attends that school may send the child to any accredited public school with an appropriate grade level in the district.

- The school, with the State Superintendent's approval, must align itself with an existing research-based school improvement model or establish an affiliation for providing assistance to the school with a college or university located in Michigan.
- The school must be closed.

Code Amendments

Currently, a school must comply with certain requirements, in addition to those in Section 1280, in order to be accredited under that section. The additional requirements include the submission of an annual education report, the adoption and implementation of a three- to five-year school improvement plan and continuing school improvement process, and the provision of a core academic curriculum. The bill would delete the references to accreditation and to Section 1280 in these provisions (although schools still would have to comply with the requirements).

The bill also would delete a requirement that a school board post a notice of the accreditation status of each school it operates on its website.

In addition, the bill would delete a requirement that an urban high school academy comply with Section 1280.

MCL 380.523 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Suzanne Lowe

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill could result in some administrative savings at the Department of Education related to the removal of the requirements to annually accredit eligible schools and annually compile and report on accreditation status of schools around the State, as well as review accreditation standards. Repealing Section 1280 also would remove the requirement that the Department provide technical assistance to unaccredited schools or to schools in interim status, if requested by the board of the district. However, determination of adequate yearly progress, persistently low achieving status, teacher evaluation, pupil performance and testing, and other factors still would be required.

A local school district currently pursuing accreditation could see some savings if the accreditation process being used is a full building-level evaluation with school data collection, self-study, visitation and validation, determination of performance data to be used, and the development of a school improvement plan. Other requirements related to the Federal No Child Left Behind determination of adequate yearly progress and State requirements for pupil testing, teacher evaluation, etc., would remain. However, if a district is undertaking specific activities related only to seeking the label of accreditation that do not also relate to the remaining State and Federal requirements, then the district could see some savings with the elimination of State accreditation.

In addition, Section 1280 specifies four measures that the State Superintendent can impose upon a school that is identified as unaccredited for three consecutive years (listed above). With the repeal of Section 1280, these four measures also would be eliminated, thereby resulting in possible fiscal implication, although, to date, no school has been identified as unaccredited by the State under the current accreditation system.

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.