

EXPAND DEFINITION OF DUAL ENROLLMENT POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Phone: (517) 373-8080
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House Bill 4735 as enacted
Public Act 11 of 2018
Sponsor: Rep. Aaron Miller
House Committee: Education Reform
Senate Committee: Education
Complete to 6-18-18

BRIEF SUMMARY: House Bill 4735 would amend the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act to expand the eligible postsecondary institutions with which a student may participate in dual enrollment programs to include out-of-state institutions for pupils in districts, or public school academies or nonpublic schools located in districts, that border other states.

FISCAL IMPACT: House Bill 4735 would have no fiscal impact for the state or for school districts because the bill would align the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act with recently enacted changes to Section 6 of the State School Aid Act to expand the pupils who may be counted by a district for dual enrollment purposes to include those attending out-of-state postsecondary institutions if the district borders another state.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Michigan's dual enrollment statutes currently require school districts and public school academies to ensure that each student in eighth grade or higher is given information about the ability to take college courses. Students may then take those courses as long as they are not offered by the student's high school and would lead toward postsecondary credit, accreditation, certification, or other licensing. However, for students in border communities—especially in rural areas of the state—the distance to the closest Michigan postsecondary institution may render the possibility infeasible. The bill aims to allow students in those border communities the option of taking certain state-funded courses in neighboring states.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

Essentially the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act allows eligible high school students to take certain postsecondary courses for high school credit, as long as the Act's requirements are met, and provides for state funding for eligible costs up to a capped state share, calculated annually based on average statewide per pupil foundation allowances.

Currently, an *eligible postsecondary institution* includes a state university, community college, or independent nonprofit degree-granting college or university that complies with the act and is located in Michigan.

House Bill 4735 would expand that definition to apply to out-of-state colleges in bordering states that are within 20 miles of a border with Michigan and that comply with the act, as long as at least one of the following applies:

- For eligible students enrolled in a school district, the district must share a land border with the state in which the out-of-state college is located.
- For eligible students enrolled in a public school academy (PSA, or charter school) or nonpublic school, the school must be located in a district that shares a land border with the state in which the out-of-state college is located.

The bill would also define ***out-of-state college*** as a state university, community college, or independent nonprofit degree-granting college or university that is located in another state and that is legally established under the laws of that state.

Finally, the bill would amend the definition of an ***eligible charge*** in order to address cost concerns. Accordingly, spending at the out-of-state college would be limited to whichever is less—the rate the student would pay at his or her local community college or the rate the student would pay at the out-of-state college if he or she were a resident of that district.

The bill’s changes to the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act would align it with the State School Aid Act, which incorporated similar conditions for pupils eligible to be counted in a district’s membership under PA 108 of 2017.¹

MCL 388.513

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In order to provide additional course options at postsecondary institutions, the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act, enacted in 1996, provides for state payment for a share of eligible dual enrollment costs. State payment for “eligible charges” is subject to yearly course limits based on when the student first enrolls in courses under the act, as well as an overall limit of ten courses.

Unless otherwise agreed, the school district is billed directly by the postsecondary institution. The district then pays for the student’s tuition, mandatory course fees, material fees, and registration fees, capped at the statewide pupil-weighted average foundation allowance—estimated at \$7,784 for the 2017-2018 school year—and adjusted for the proportion of the school year that the student attends the postsecondary institution from the state funds allocated to the district under the State School Aid Act. For students enrolled in nonpublic schools, the postsecondary institution bills the state Department of Treasury. To the extent that the funds provided by the state are insufficient to cover the eligible costs, the student is required to make up the difference.

¹ See the State School Aid Act, MCL 388.1606(4)(jj), effective October 1, 2017.

DISCUSSION:

According to committee testimony, this legislation would provide an important option to students in communities that border other states, especially in rural areas. While most Michigan students are able to make use of programs within a certain radius of their high school, students in border communities are only able to utilize programs in the slice of that pie that falls in Michigan. For example, Menominee is approximately 50 miles from the nearest Michigan community college in Escanaba, but only about three miles from the nearest Wisconsin community college. The savings in travel time would make dual enrollment a viable option for students who otherwise would not have that opportunity.

However, some expressed concern that the legislation would effectively result in the state using taxpayer dollars to send Michigan students out-of-state. As the state has a vested interest in retaining Michigan's best and brightest, should we really send the message that the best opportunities for Michigan's students lie elsewhere?

Legislative Analyst: Jenny McInerney
Fiscal Analysts: Bethany Wicksall
Samuel Christensen

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