

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS

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House Bill 4805 (H-3) as reported from committee
Sponsor: Rep. John Reilly
Committee: Education Reform
Complete to 10-24-17

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4805 would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1278d) to exempt part-time students enrolled under Section 166b of the State School Aid Act from developing, reviewing, or revising educational development plans (EDPs).

[Section 166b of the Act allows nonpublic school students in grades K-12, as well as students being homeschooled, to be enrolled in curricular offerings provided by the district, PSA, or intermediate school board (ISD), with state school aid provided as long as the offerings meet certain requirements. A student enrolled in these offerings under this section is a part time pupil for purposes of state school aid, except that the student may not counted as more than 0.75 of a full-time equated membership.]

Currently, section 1278b(11) of the Code requires a school board or board of directors of a public school academy (PSA) to give seventh grade students the opportunity to develop an EDP, which would be reviewed during the student's eighth grade year and revised as appropriate. The EDP must fill all of the following requirements:

- Be developed, reviewed, and revised under the supervision of the student's school counselor or another person designated to act in that role by the principal;
- Be based on high school readiness scores and a career pathways program or similar career exploration program; and
- Be designed to assist pupils to identify career development goals as they relate to academic requirements.

Additionally, during the process of developing and reviewing the EDP, the student must be advised of the curricular requirements that may be fulfilled through career and technical education.

The Code does not currently require EDPs from these students. However, the bill would specifically exempt homeschooled students and nonpublic school students from that requirement, and prohibit the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) from promulgating or enforcing a rule that would require an EDP of them.

BACKGROUND:

According to the bill sponsor, the bill is intended to protect homeschooling families from a planned requirement that homeschooled students taking more than two courses at a virtual academy submit an EDP. The bill would forestall such a requirement.

The requirement to complete an EDP for those students already exists in Section 21f of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1621f). Specifically, in addition to other requirements, a student may be enrolled in more than two virtual courses in a specific academic term, semester, or trimester if "[t]he primary district, in collaboration with the pupil, has developed an education development plan, in a form and manner specified by the department, that is kept on file by the district." However, Senate Bill 133, which was enrolled on October 18, 2017, amends the State School Aid Act to carve out a complementary exception from the EDP for home-schooled and nonpublic students.

Michigan is one of eleven states where homeschooling parents are not required to register with the state.¹ Because of this, it is impossible to give a definitive number of homeschooled students, but most estimates place the number at about 50,000.

According to MDE, annual reporting is voluntary except when the homeschooled student is requesting eligible special education services from the local public school or intermediate school district (ISD). However, reporting is suggested, as failure to do so may result in the student being marked absent from the local school and involvement of a truancy officer.

See the following MDE publication for additional information about homeschooling:
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/home_schools_122555_7.pdf

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 4805 would have no fiscal impact for the state or school districts because the Code requires only that a district "provide the opportunity" for students to develop an EDP and does not actually require EDPs.

DISCUSSION:

According to committee testimony, EDPs are most appropriate for students seeking diplomas; the bill is intended to ensure that the Michigan education environment is inclusive to all students. Those testifying stated that the Michigan public school system and the homeschool community have had a fraught relationship, with homeschooling families wary of new regulations and the school environment inflexible toward homeschoolers' unique needs. Further, they argued that a move to require EDPs of homeschooled students "will make us go underground again."

¹ States requiring no notice: Alaska, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Texas. <https://www.hslda.org/laws/>

POSITIONS:

Representatives of the following organizations testified in support of the bill:

- Oxford Virtual Academy-Virtual Oxford School District (9-28-17)
- Homeschool Connections Educational Services (9-28-17)
- EdTech Specialists (9-28-17)

The Michigan Family Forum supports the bill. (10-19-17)

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