

ACADEMIC DISTRESS COMMISSION

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House Bill 5818 as Introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Jackson
Committee: Appropriations
Committee Analysis

SUMMARY:

HB 5818 would amend the school code to allow for the creation of Academic Distress Commissions for which the circumstances and the proposed duties are summarized below.

If the State Superintendent of Public Instruction determined that at least 50% of the schools operated by a school district failed to achieve the federal pupil performance standard for 3 or more consecutive years then the Governor could declare that the school district has an academic emergency and could establish an Academic Distress Commission for the school district.

If the Governor declared that a school district had an academic emergency, an academic distress commission would have to be established for that district. The Commission would consist of 3 voting members appointed for a 2-year term.

- The Governor would appoint 2 of the members;
- The president of the local school board would appoint 1 member that would have to be a resident of the school district and could not be a member of the local school board.
- The chair of the commission would be one of the Governor's appointees.

If the school district had an emergency financial manager in place, he or she could also serve on the Commission. Also, the Governor could give the emergency financial manager academic authority in the interim between the school district's designation and the establishment of the Commission.

Within 120 days after the first meeting of the Commission, it would have to adopt a 24-month academic recovery plan to improve academic performance. This plan would have to be submitted to the Senate and House standing committees on education. The Commission also would have to consider the 24-month academic improvement plan submitted by the local school board when the district received notice that they were in an academic emergency.

The bill appropriates \$5,000 to qualifying school districts for development and submission of the 24-month academic improvement plan.

The Commission's academic recovery plan would have to include all of the following:

- Short and long term action to be taken to improve academic performance.
- Expectations for outcomes to be achieved by the end of the 24 months.
- Roles and responsibilities of the school district superintendent and the school board.

- The sequence and timing of the short and long term actions and the persons responsible for implementing each action.
- Resources that would be applied toward improvement effort.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating improvement efforts.
- A disclosure of the extent to which the academic recovery plan included components of the local school board's own academic improvement plans.
- A description of required school leadership turnaround skill sets and either the resource allocation or professional development process to be used to acquire them.

The Commission would have to seek task-specific input and assistance from the local school board regarding ways to improve the district's academic performance and implement the academic recovery plan.

The Commission would be *allowed* to do all of the following:

- Appoint school administrators and reassign administrative personnel.
- Terminate contracts of administrators and administrative personnel.
- Contract with a private entity to perform school or district management functions.
- Establish a budget for the district and approve district appropriations and expenditures, unless the school district had an emergency financial manager in place.

The Commission would be *required* to do all of the following:

- Every 4 months it would have to submit and post a report concerning its progress to the Governor, Senate Majority Leader, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the legislative body of the local municipality in which the majority of the territory of the school district is located, and the local school board.
- The Commission members would have to be available to testify before the education committees.
- Every 4 months the Commission would have to conduct public forums within the school district to receive input from the community and inform the community of its activities and progress.

The State Superintendent would dissolve the Commission when he or she determines that the district satisfied all of the following:

- Established an academic delivery structure that produces an improvement trend line for affected schools.
- Less than 30% of the schools operated by the district failed to meet the federal pupil performance standard.
- Accomplished all outcomes outlined in the Commission's 24-month plan.

If the Commission did not meet its goals within 2 years, the Governor could order a new Commission for an additional 2 years. A Commission could not be reinstated more than 2 times (for a maximum 6 years.) However, after dissolution of the Commission, the Governor could not appoint another Commission for a period of 5 years.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill appropriates \$5,000 for a school district that has an academic emergency and for which an Academic Distress Commission has been established. Funding would be used for the development and submission of the 24-month academic improvement plan. The total State impact is indeterminate since the number of qualifying school districts is unknown. There would also be indeterminate additional costs to the department for implementation and oversight of the Commission and its requirements.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.