

Legislative Analysis



MEMBERSHIP COUNT: DROPOUT RECOVERY PROGRAM EXCEPTION

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Senate Bill 969 as passed by the Senate
Sponsor: Sen. John Proos
House Committee: Education
Senate Committee: Education

Complete to 11-28-12

A SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 969 AS PASSED BY THE SENATE 10-17-12

Senate Bill 969 (S-3) is tie-barred to House Bill 5267 (S-2), which is awaiting action on the Senate calendar. The two bills would take effect retroactively, on October 1, 2012.

The bills would amend the State School Aid Act to provide for a district to qualify for special pupil membership counting provisions, as well as a seat time exemption, if the district operated a dropout recovery program that met specified criteria.

The State School Aid Act defines the term "membership" and provides for the calculation of membership for purposes of determining state school aid. In this calculation, House Bill 5267 (S-2) provides that, for a pupil enrolled in a dropout recovery program meeting the requirements of Section 23a (proposed by the bill), the pupil would be counted as 1/12 of a full-time equated membership for each month the district reported that the pupil was enrolled in the program and in full attendance.

The district would have to report to the Department of Education the number of pupils who were enrolled in the program and in full attendance for a month by the 10th day of the following month. The district could report a pupil as being in full attendance for a month only if both of the following were met:

- A personalized learning plan was in place before the month in which the pupil began participation in the program.
- The pupil either met the district's definition (under Section 23a) of monthly progress for that month or met that definition in the previous month and appropriate interventions were implemented within 10 school days after the determination that the pupil failed to meet that definition.

Under proposed Section 23a, a dropout recovery program operated by a district would qualify for the special membership counting provisions described above, and an exemption from days and hours of pupil instruction requirements [a seat time exemption outlined in Senate Bill 969 (S-3)], if the program met all of the following:

- Enrolled only eligible pupils.

- Provided an advocate.
- Developed a written learning plan.
- Monitored the pupil's progress against the written learning plan.
- Required each pupil to make satisfactory monthly progress, as defined by the district.
- Reported the pupil's progress results to a partner district at least monthly.
- Provided a computer and internet access for each participating eligible pupil, if the program were operated using distance learning online.
- Operated throughout the entire calendar year.

An advocate could be employed by the district or provided by an education management organization (EMO) that was partnering with the district, could serve between one and 50 pupils, and would be required to comply with the conditions for employment as described in the Revised School Code. If the district partnered with an EMO, that EMO would have to have a dropout recover program partnership relationship with at least one other district.

Section 101 of the State School Aid Act prescribes the minimum number of hours and days of pupil instruction required for full state aid allocation and used in calculating the full-time equivalency of pupils. Under Senate Bill 969 (S-3), these requirements would not apply to eligible pupils enrolled in a dropout recovery program that met the requirements of proposed Section 23a.

[Note: House Bill 5267 (S-2), the bill to which Senate Bill 969 (S-3) is tie-barred, would define the following terms:

"Education management organization" would mean a private provider that operates one or more other dropout recovery programs that meet the requirements of Section 23a in partnership with one or more districts.

"Eligible pupil" would mean a pupil who has been expelled from school under the mandatory expulsion provisions of the Revised School Code, suspended or expelled from school under a local policy, or referred by a court, is pregnant or is a parent, was previously a dropout, or is determined by the district to be at risk of dropping out.

"Advocate" would mean an adult available to meet in person with assigned pupils, as needed, to conduct social interventions, proctor final exams, and provide academic and social support to pupils enrolled in the district's dropout recovery program.

"Written learning plan" as a written plan developed by the advocate, that includes the plan's start and end dates, courses to be taken, credit to be earned for each course, teacher of record for each course, and advocate name and contact information.

"Satisfactory monthly progress" would mean an amount of progress measureable on a monthly basis and that, if conducted for a full 12 months, would result in the same amount of academic credit being awarded to the pupil as would be awarded to a general

education pupil completing a full school year. Satisfactory monthly progress could include a lesser required amount of progress for the first two months a pupil participated in the program.]

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill is tie-barred to House Bill 5267, which provides for an alternative pupil membership count for school districts operating dropout recovery programs that meet certain requirements. To the extent that such programs successfully re-enroll students who have previously dropped out, or prevent students at risk of dropping out from actually doing so, SB 969 (taken together with HB 5267) would increase the pupil membership counts of individual school districts and the state, thereby increasing School Aid outlays.

According to the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), the statewide 6-year dropout rate for the 2006 cohort, i.e. those students who first enrolled in the 9th grade in the 2005-06 school year but did not receive a diploma or other credential within 6 years was 16.3%. That equates to 23,201 dropouts in a cohort of 147,387 pupils. Districts would receive 1/12 of a foundation allowance for each pupil enrolled in the program.

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