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SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 770 (as introduced 10-22-97)

Sponsor: Senator Glenn D. Steil

Committee: Education

Date Completed: 11-12-97

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to:

- Repeal sections of the Code and the State School Aid Act that require the board of a school district or a public school academy to award a State-endorsed high school diploma and that provide for the assessment of pupils to determine proficiency.
- Prohibit a school board or a public school academy from awarding a high school diploma to a pupil who did not complete a standardized test, as specified in the bill.
- Require an entity administering a test to report a pupil's results to the pupil or his or her parent or legal guardian, and require a school district or public school academy to report the aggregate results to the local intermediate school district and the Department of Education.
- Require a school district or a public school academy to pay for the test and require the Department to reimburse school districts and academies for the costs.
- Permit the Department to promulgate rules establishing exceptions from the testing, and provide that an exception could not be based solely on the request of a pupil's parent or legal guardian.

Testing

The bill would repeal sections of the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1279) and the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1704a) that require the awarding of a State-endorsed high school diploma and provide for the proficiency testing of graduating pupils.

The board of a school district, local act school district, or public school academy could not award a high school diploma to a pupil who did not complete at least one of the following standardized tests: the ACT test, administered by ACT, Inc.; the Scholastic Aptitude Test, administered by the College Board; or, the ACT Work Keys Test, administered by ACT, Inc.

Reporting Results

The entity administering a test required under the bill would have to report each pupil's individual results to the pupil's parent or legal guardian or to the pupil according to the procedures normally followed by the entity for reporting results. In addition, the entity would have to report the aggregate results achieved by the pupils of each school district or public school academy to the school district or the academy. Each school district or academy would have to report the aggregate results to the intermediate school district in which it was located and to the Department of Education. A school district or academy could satisfy the requirement to report the results to the Department by including the results in the annual educational report submitted to the State Board of Education under the Code.

Paying for the Test

The board of a school district, local act school district, or public school academy would have to pay for the testing required under the bill and assist pupils as needed in making arrangements to take a test. The Department would have to reimburse school districts and academies for these costs.

Exceptions from the Test

The Department could promulgate rules establishing exceptions from the testing required under the bill. The rules could allow exceptions only for bona fide educational reasons and could include, but would not be limited to, exceptions for special education pupils who were unable to complete the test or assessment due to a disability and for pupils of limited English language proficiency. The rules could not allow an exception based solely on the request of a pupil's parent or legal guardian.

Proposed MCL 380.1279g

Legislative Analyst: L. Arasim

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill would have a fiscal impact on both the State and local school districts. The elimination of the current proficiency assessment tool, commonly known as the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT), could result in cost savings to the State. Currently, the Michigan Department of Education receives approximately \$1,300,000 to administer both the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and the HSPT. Elimination of the HSPT could result in the elimination of some of the currently funded 14 full-time positions since the State would no longer administer the HSPT. However, because the bill would require the State to reimburse local school districts for the costs of the ACT, ACT Works, or SAT tests, the savings would not be enough to cover the increased cost of reimbursing school districts for these tests. All students graduating with a Michigan high school diploma would be required to take one of the three tests in order to be awarded a diploma.

The current cost of each ACT test is \$20.00 per student while the cost of the ACT Works test is \$41.50 per student. The current cost of the SAT test is \$22.50 per student. Using an average cost per test of \$28.00 multiplied by the estimated 90,000 high school seniors Statewide, the estimated total cost of reimbursement to local school districts would be \$2,500,000. This amount is \$1,200,000 higher than the current appropriation. Any savings that would result from the elimination of the HSPT would reduce the estimated additional cost of \$1,200,000 by that amount. The current cost of the printing, scoring, and reporting of the HSPT is approximately \$16.50 per student. Also, students are not required to take the HSPT to graduate.

Finally, there could be an additional cost to local districts if they chose to get a district-wide profile of all the high schools in their district as well as summarized results for all schools. The current cost for this service by ACT is \$105 while SAT charges \$160 for this service. It is not clear in the bill if this cost also would be reimbursed by the State. The cost of this service, based on an average cost of \$133 per district (assuming 300 districts chose this option), would be approximately \$40,000.

Fiscal Analyst: J. Carrasco

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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.