

Legislative Analysis



ADD REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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House Bill 4552 (Draft #4 of proposed H-1 substitute)
Sponsor: Rep. Brett Roberts
Committee: Workforce and Talent Development
Complete to 9-16-15

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

REVISED SUMMARY:

House Bill 4552 would amend Section 1233 of the Revised School Code to add a requirement that a school counselor must complete at least 25 hours of professional development covering counseling about the college preparation and selection process and at least 25 hours of professional development regarding career counseling in order to be eligible to have a license renewed by the Department of Education.

This requirement would take effect on January 1, 2017, at which time the department could not renew the license of an individual who had not completed the new hours requirement in the time since that individual's school counselor credential was issued or last renewed, whichever is most recent.

For purposes of determining whether an individual has met the career counseling hours requirement, the bill would define career counseling as including, but not limited to, exploration of the skilled trades and other pathways that lead to industry credentials awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an occupation.

The bill would allow professional development provided by a school district, intermediate school district (ISD), public school academy, or nonpublic school under Section 1527 of the Code to count toward the fulfillment of these hours. Section 1527 of the Code requires public schools, ISDs, and public school academies to provide at least five professional development days, and states that a nonpublic school may offer professional development days.

The department would have to approve the professional development required by the bill, and would only be allowed to approve a professional development program or course if the department determines that the content and curriculum for that program or course meet standards that are developed by the department in consultation with the Department of Talent and Economic Development and groups representing school counselors, college admissions professionals, financial aid officers, employers, and others deemed as appropriate by the department. The department would be required to develop these standards by March 1, 2016, and to facilitate the involvement of the aforementioned groups. The state superintendent of public instruction would also be able to promulgate or modify rules as necessary to implement the bill's changes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Generally speaking, the board of a school district or intermediate school district is currently prohibited from allowing an individual to serve as a school counselor unless that individual meets one or more of the following three sets of requirements:

- (1) Holds a valid teaching certificate with a school counseling endorsement.
- (2) Meets all of the following:
 - Holds a master's degree awarded after completion of an approved school counselor education program that includes at least all of the following skills and content areas or their equivalent:
 - Guidance services--philosophy, principles, and practices
 - Individual and group analysis--nature and range of human characteristics and appraisal methods
 - Guidance information--vocational development theory, educational and occupational information
 - Counseling theory and practice--individual and group procedures, administration and coordination relationships, professional relationships, and ethics
 - Supervised experiences--laboratory, practicum, or internship
 - Evaluation--statistics and research methodology, follow-up evaluation, and measurement methods
 - Has successfully completed the department's guidance counselor examination.
 - Has been recommended by an approved school counselor education program to provide services as a school counselor.
- (3) Meets both of the following:
 - Has at least five years of successful experience serving in a school counseling role in another state within the immediately preceding seven-year period.
 - Has successfully completed the department's guidance counselor examination.

The new requirements in House Bill 4552 would be in addition to current requirements.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill could increase costs for the state by requiring the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Talent and Economic Development and other groups, to create counseling professional development content and curricula standards, to approve valid professional development programs based on those standards, and to monitor the number of completed professional development hours for the renewal of counselor certifications. However, the added responsibilities may only require the redirection of existing staff time rather than the hiring of additional staff, and thus create minimal costs.

The bill would have no fiscal impact for local school districts.

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