

HOUSE SUMMARY OF SENATE AMENDMENTS

HB 708

2024 Regular Session

Freiberg

SCHOOLS/CHARTER: Revises requirements that charter schools meet a certain threshold with respect to the number of students with exceptionalities and economically disadvantaged students relative to its total student enrollment

Synopsis of Senate Amendments

1. Reinstates and revises present law requirement that charter schools meet a certain threshold with respect to the number of students with exceptionalities and economically disadvantaged students relative to their total student enrollment.
2. Adds that if the aggregate student enrollment data for all of the charter schools located within the boundaries of a school system meet such enrollment requirement, every charter school located within the system shall be deemed to be in compliance with the requirement.
3. Requires BESE to develop rules for determining a charter school's compliance with proposed law application and enrollment transparency requirements, to provide for a process to investigate allegations of a charter school's discriminatory practices, and to annually produce a status report regarding enrollment percentages of economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.

Digest of Bill as Finally Passed by Senate

Present law requires a charter school to meet a certain threshold with respect to the number of students with exceptionalities (other than gifted or talented) and economically disadvantaged students relative to their total student enrollment, as follows:

- (1) Requires that the percentage of the total number of students enrolled in the charter school who are students with exceptionalities (other than gifted or talented) be at least 85% of the average percentage of students enrolled in the local public school districts from which the charter school enrolls its students who are such students.
- (2) Requires that the percentage of the total number of students enrolled in the charter school who are economically disadvantaged be at least 85% of the average percentage of students enrolled in the local public school districts from which the charter school enrolls its students who are such students.

Proposed law changes this threshold from 85% to 70% and adds that, if the aggregate student enrollment data for all of the charter schools located within a school system meet this enrollment requirement, every charter school located within the school system shall be deemed to be in compliance with the requirement.

Proposed law revises present law relative to charter proposals as follows:

- (1) Present law precludes the exclusion of students based on certain criteria. Proposed law adds being economically disadvantaged to these criteria.
- (2) Present law requires a description of how a charter school fulfills present law purposes. Proposed law includes consideration of how to serve the best interests of economically disadvantaged students in this requirement.

- (3) Present law requires a description of a school's education program. Proposed law adds how the program will meet the educational needs of economically disadvantaged students and students with exceptionalities to this requirement.

Present law provides for admissions lotteries. Proposed law provides additional lottery procedures including parental notification.

Present law prohibits a charter school from requiring parents to disclose certain information (a student's medical information or special education needs) prior to enrollment unless otherwise required by law. Proposed law adds income and economically disadvantaged status to this information.

Proposed law further requires the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to:

- (1) Develop rules for determining a charter school's compliance with proposed law application and enrollment transparency requirements.
- (2) Provide for a process to investigate allegations of discriminatory practices of a charter school.
- (3) Annually produce a status report regarding enrollment percentages of economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.

Present law authorizes giving enrollment preference to student with special needs when parents have disclosed such needs. Proposed law includes economically disadvantaged students whose parents have disclosed this status.

(Amends R.S. 17:3973(2)(b)(v)(aa), 3983(F)(1), 3991(B)(1)(a)(i), (3), (6), and (7), (C)(1)(a), (b), and (c)(i) and (iii), and (E)(6), and 3991.1(E)(2); Adds R.S. 17:3991(B)(1)(f) and (C)(1)(e))