
DIGEST

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Hollis

HB No. 558

Abstract: Provides generally for the establishment, organization, and administration of the "Course Choice Program".

Present law (R.S. 17:4002.1-4002.6) establishes the Course Choice Program. Requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to create a process for authorizing course providers, including online or virtual providers, postsecondary education institutions, and corporations that offer vocational or technical courses. Provides that the process shall include certain required information to be provided by proposed authorizers, including the administration of state assessments, the parishes or school systems where the provider will operate, the proposed courses offered, and the alignment of the courses with any approved La. diploma. Provides for an initial authorization period of three years and provides for reauthorization for additional periods of three to five years.

Present law provides for monitoring and evaluation of course providers by BESE. Further requires BESE to create a common course numbering process and course catalogue for all courses and a reciprocal teacher certification process for certain teachers residing in other states who are employed by course providers. Requires local school systems to establish policies and procedures for counting credits earned by and administering state tests to eligible students and for all services to be provided to eligible students, including those with Individual Education Plans.

Present law specifies that course providers shall receive a per course amount for each eligible funded student which shall be 1/6 of 90% of the annual Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) per pupil amount. Requires any remaining funds (with certain exceptions) to be returned to the state or the local school system according to the pro rata share for the annual MFP per pupil amount for the school system in which the student resides. Further requires 10% of the per pupil amount according to such pro rata share to remain with the local school system in which the student is enrolled full time to be used to finance any administrative or operational costs to support students enrolled in courses offered by course providers as determined by BESE. For eligible students who receive scholarships pursuant to present law, requires that the course provider shall receive payment only for the courses in which the student is enrolled pursuant to present law and the remaining funds for each student, up to the maximum amount as determined by the MFP, stay with the participating school in which the student is enrolled.

Present law allows course providers to charge tuition to eligible participating students in an amount determined by the provider. Provides that 50% of the tuition to be paid or transferred through the MFP to the course provider shall be done so upon student enrollment in a course, and

50% shall be paid or transferred upon course completion. Provides that under specified circumstances, the course provider shall receive 40% of the course amount if the student fails to complete the course in the time required by the provider.

Present law defines eligible students as those enrolled in certain public schools, home study programs, and nonpublic schools. Provides that certain test scores of eligible students shall be counted in the school performance score for the school where the student is enrolled full-time. Requires the state Dept. of Education to publish such test scores on its website.

Proposed law provides that the provisions of present law are severable should a provision be held invalid.

Proposed law makes technical changes to present law.

(Amends R.S. 17:4002.1-4002.6; Adds R.S. 17:4002.7)