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## DIGEST

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HB 771 Original

2016 Regular Session

Schroder

**Abstract:** Provides that a student shall not be required to meet state exit exam requirements as a condition for promotion or graduation or to earn a high school diploma; provides for submission of petitions by certain students to receive a diploma; provides for procedures, guidelines, and rules with regard to such petitions.

Present law, relative to required state assessments for public school students as part of the La. Educational Assessment Program (LEAP), requires the state Dept. of Education with the approval of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), to establish the level of achievement on the state-required assessments in fourth and eighth grades as definitive of the level of the student's proficiency in math, English language arts, science, and social studies. Requires fourth and eighth grade students to demonstrate proficiency on such tests in order to advance to grades five and nine, pursuant to rules adopted by BESE. Requires the department, with the approval of BESE, to establish various intervention options for students who fail to demonstrate proficiency, which may include remediation, retention in grade, an alternative placement in succeeding grades, or any other option that will support a student's achieving the required proficiency level.

Proposed law deletes present law requirement that fourth and eighth grade students demonstrate proficiency in order to be promoted to the next grade and that the department establish the required proficiency level required for such students to achieve. Also deletes the requirement that the intervention options established by the department include grade retention and alternative placement. Otherwise retains present law.

Proposed law adds that beginning with the graduating class of 2017, a student shall not be required to meet state exit exam requirements as a condition for promotion or graduation or to earn a La. high school diploma. Provides that a person who is no longer enrolled in a public school and who previously failed to receive a high school diploma or was denied graduation solely for failing to meet the exit exam requirements pursuant to BESE policy may petition the local public school board to determine if he is eligible to receive a high school diploma pursuant to proposed law. Provides for procedures for submission of such petitions including eligibility criteria and time lines. Specifies that a person receiving a diploma pursuant to proposed law shall not be counted as a graduate in any graduation rate calculations for affected schools and districts, including calculations for any prior year. Requires the department to report to BESE and the House and Senate education committees on the number of diplomas granted, by school district, pursuant to proposed law. Requires BESE to promulgate rules in accordance with the Admin. Procedure Act for implementation of proposed law. Requires the department to disseminate a copy of proposed law requirements and procedures

and guidelines for submitting petitions to local public school systems and specifies certain minimum information to be included in such procedures and guidelines.

Present law, relative to the career options program, provides that for students who have not otherwise met state-established benchmarks on required state assessments after a specified number of years, the student's Individualized Education Program team shall have the option of determining an alternative pathway to graduation for the student. Provides that if an Individualized Education Program team determines that state-established benchmarks on the required state assessments are no longer a condition for promotion or graduation for a student, the team shall establish minimum performance requirements in the student's Individualized Education Plan relevant to promotion or graduation requirements, including but not limited to end-of-course assessments and shall provide the student and his parent or legal guardian with information related to how requirements that vary from standard expectations may impact future educational and career options. Proposed law provides that the team shall only take such actions if the team determines that an alternative pathway is appropriate for the student instead of if it determines that state-established benchmarks on the required state assessments are no longer a condition for promotion or graduation for the student. Deletes present law reference to state-established assessments *required for graduation*.

(Amends R.S. 17:24.4(F)(4)(a) and 183.2(B)(1) and (2)(intro. para.); Adds R.S. 17:24.4(F)(5))