
DIGEST

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HB 280 Original

2021 Regular Session

Edmonds

Abstract: Revises eligibility criteria for school participation in the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program and removes the program enrollment cap applicable to certain schools.

Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program, generally

Present law provides for the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program, through which students attend participating schools through state-funded scholarships. Provides for administration by the state Dept. of Education.

Dept. of Education responsibilities

Present law provides for the responsibilities of the state Dept. of Education to relative to program administration. Proposed law retains present law and additionally requires DOE to conduct annual site visits at schools about which concerns have been raised regarding the academic welfare, health, or safety of participating students in order to observe the learning environment.

Enrollment cap

Present law caps enrollment of scholarship recipients in a school that has been approved, provisionally approved, or probationally approved for under two years to a maximum of 20% of the school's total enrollment. Proposed law removes this enrollment cap.

Eligibility of participating nonpublic schools

Present law provides eligibility criteria for nonpublic schools to participate in the program, including being BESE-approved and being in compliance with nondiscrimination requirements in federal law (*Brumfield vs. Dodd*). Proposed law, applicable to schools joining the program in the 2022-2023 school year or thereafter, provides that such schools must also be either:

- (1) Accredited by an accrediting entity specified in proposed law.
- (2) Designated as a provisionally accredited approved school, which means that it is working toward meeting accreditation requirements and has met all other criteria for BESE approval. (Provides for removal of such a school from the program if it fails to receive accreditation within four years.)

Ineligibility

Proposed law adds that a school that fails to meet minimum standards for academic performance for three consecutive school years shall not be eligible for program participation; provides that measurement of three consecutive years for this purpose shall commence with the 2021-2022 school year.

(Amends R.S. 17:4021(A); Adds R.S. 17:4015(10), 4021(D), and 4021.1)