
DIGEST

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Shadoin

HB No. 774

Abstract: Provides relative to the Course Choice Program including student eligibility and enrollment, course approval, course amounts, and funding.

Present law provides for the Course Choice Program and 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 for an initial authorization period of three years and provides for reauthorization for additional periods of three to five years, subject to BESE review of the course provider's activities and the academic performance of the students enrolled in courses offered by the course provider. Further provides for monitoring and evaluation of course providers by BESE.

Present law defines "eligible funded student" as a student who resides in La. and meets one of the following:

- (1) Attends a public school with a letter grade of "C", "D", or "F".
- (2) Attends a public school that does not offer the course in which a student desires to enroll.
- (3) Is the recipient of a scholarship pursuant to the Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program (voucher program).

Proposed law instead defines "eligible funded student" as a student who resides in La., attends a public school, and has obtained permission from the local school superintendent or other designated person to enroll in a course offered by a course provider.

Present law defines "eligible participating student" as a student who resides in La. and meets one of the following criteria:

- (1) Attends a public school with a letter grade of "A" or "B".
- (2) Attends a nonpublic school that is approved, provisionally approved, or probationally approved by BESE.
- (3) Is enrolled in a BESE-approved home study program.

Proposed law retains present law except changes (1) to a student who is a scholarship recipient pursuant to the voucher program instead of a student who attends an "A" or "B" public school.

Present law requires that course providers 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 in accordance with certain annual MFP per-pupil amounts. Provides for certain amounts of funds to remain with local school systems and schools participating in the voucher program to finance administrative or operational costs to support students enrolled in courses offered by course providers. Proposed law instead provides that the course provider shall receive a course amount for each eligible funded student, as approved by the state Dept. of Education or the governing authority of the public school that the student attends.

Present law allows course providers to charge tuition to eligible participating students in an amount determined by the provider and reported to the state Dept. of Education. Proposed law instead allows a course provider to charge tuition to any eligible participating student in an amount approved by the department.

Present law provides that 50% of the amount of tuition to be paid or transferred through the MFP to the course provider shall be paid or transferred upon student enrollment in a course, and 50% shall be paid or transferred upon course completion, according to the published course length. Proposed law retains present law payment process except deletes reference to payment or transfer through the MFP.

Proposed law provides that the state shall reimburse the governing authority of the public school a student attends for 90% of the cost established for each course the student enrolls in pursuant to the course choice program out of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for this purpose. Further requires the Dept. of Education to provide forms and guidelines whereby the governing authority of a public school may request such reimbursement and ensure that reimbursement is made within 60 days of receipt of the application.

Present law requires BESE to create a common course numbering system and a course catalogue for all courses offered, by parish. Proposed law retains present law and additionally requires BESE to update the course catalogue prior to the beginning of each school year. Further requires BESE to include any course offered for dual enrollment by a La. public postsecondary education institution in the course catalogue, with no requirement for course approval by BESE or the state Dept. of Education.

Proposed law changes references in present law to "local school system" and "local board" to "public school governing authority" and requires such governing authorities to establish policies and procedures for granting approval to an eligible funded student to enroll in a course offered by a course provider.

Present law requires BESE to adopt rules necessary to implement the Course Choice Program, including requirements for school governing authorities whose students enroll in courses offered

by course providers. Proposed law deletes authority for rules imposing requirements on school governing authorities and requires BESE to promulgate rules to implement the program in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

Present law prohibits local public school systems from actively discouraging, intimidating, or threatening a student during the course enrollment process or at any time. Requires each public school student to enroll in at least one course at the school in which he is enrolled full time.

Proposed law deletes present law.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:4002.3(2) and (3)(a), 4002.4(A)(1), (2)(a), (C), and (D), 4002.5(A) and (F), and 4002.6; Repeals R.S. 17:4002.5(C) and (E))