
DIGEST

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Fannin

HB No. 944

Abstract: Provides relative to the high school career option program including requirements for a career major and related course work. Provides that a career diploma be considered and recognized by all public postsecondary education institutions and treated the same as a regular diploma for purposes of the school and district accountability system. Provides relative to requirements for Individual Graduation Plans.

Present law relative to the high school career option program, provides for an academic major (college prep. courses) and a career major (academic courses and modern vocational studies). Proposed law deletes the reference to an academic major.

Present law requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to develop and adopt requirements for career major programs offered by school boards and to issue a career diploma to students who successfully complete such requirements. Provides that a career diploma is considered a regular standard diploma and is recognized by institutions under the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges (LCTCS board). Proposed law retains present law except provides that a career diploma shall be recognized by all La. public postsecondary education institutions. Adds that a career diploma be given the same status and recognition for purposes of calculations of the school and district accountability system as is given a regular standard diploma and prohibits a school or school system from being penalized in any manner for students who are issued a career diploma.

Present law requires public school systems to develop and offer at least one career major program, subject to BESE approval, and provides that any such system may be granted a waiver by BESE for good cause. Proposed law instead requires such program to be developed and offered by school boards pursuant to BESE policy and deletes the waiver allowance.

Present law requires students in a career major program to complete an academic core of courses and a career and technical sequence of courses and specifies course requirements.

Proposed law provides for various changes to and retentions of the career major course requirements and allows for the completion of approved training programs that lead to an approved industry-based credential in lieu of a career and technical sequence of courses.

Present law requires a student seeking to pursue a career major curriculum to meet one of the following conditions:

- (1) Has fulfilled all requirements established by BESE and the local public school board for promotion to 9th grade.
- (2) Is at least 15 or will turn 15 during the upcoming school year and has scored at least approaching basic on certain LEAP tests and meets criteria established by the local school system's pupil progression plan to enter the 9th grade to pursue a career major curriculum. Such student must also complete a summer remediation program in the subject area of any LEAP test component on which he scored at the unsatisfactory level. A student who fails to satisfactorily complete summer remediation must complete developmental courses (for credit) necessary to be prepared to undertake the course work required for his chosen career major.

Requires BESE to certify that the pupil progression plan of each local school system that promotes a student who did not meet 8th grade LEAP standards to the 9th grade contains specified requirements. Requires a student to have written permission of his parent or legal guardian after consultation with a guidance counselor or school administrator and a determination that participation in a career major curriculum and pursuit of a career diploma is appropriate and in the student's best interest.

Proposed law deletes present law condition (2) above and instead requires that a student have fulfilled or be on track to fulfill all of the course requirements as specified in present law and proposed law. Adds a condition that a student may meet the entry or admission requirements set forth in the chosen career major program. Deletes requirements that BESE certify pupil progression plans and that a student have written permission from a parent or guardian.

Present law relative to Individual Graduation Plans, requires students by the end of the 8th grade, to develop a plan to help explore educational and career possibilities and to make appropriate decisions as part of an overall career plan. Permits students to choose the high school curriculum framework and related graduation requirements that best meet their postsecondary goals. Provides that each student's plan shall include the recommended sequence of courses needed for successful completion of his chosen career major and shall be reviewed annually and updated as needed. Requires that a student's plan be signed by the student and his parent or other legal guardian. Proposed law retains present law except requires the student to begin developing the plan by the end of the 8th grade as a guide for the next academic year's course work and provides that the recommended sequence of courses shall be as needed for successful completion of a standard diploma instead of a chosen career major. Adds that the plan list the required courses to be taken through 10th grade; identify the courses to be taken in the first year of high school; include any necessary remedial courses if the student fails to meet the standard for promotion to the 9th grade; and by the end of the 10th grade, outline high school graduation requirements relevant to the student's postsecondary goals.

(Amends R.S. 17:183.1(A) and (C)(2), 183.2, 183.3(A)(2), (B), (C), and (D), and 2925; Adds R.S. 17:183.1(D))