
DIGEST

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Leger

HB No. 968

Abstract: Provides with respect to the dropout prevention and recovery program.

Proposed law provides that each school district and charter school that provides instruction to high school pupils may offer a dropout recovery program for eligible pupils. Further provides that the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) shall prescribe standards and achievement testing requirements for dropout recovery programs that attempt to ensure that the programs are compatible with public school education goals and requirements.

Proposed law provides that the standards shall require dropout recovery programs to do all of the following:

- (1) Provide curriculum aligned to the academic standards adopted by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).
- (2) Provide standardized tests required by federal and state law.
- (3) Make available appropriate and sufficient supports for pupils, including tutoring, career counseling and college counseling.
- (4) Comply with federal and state laws governing pupils with disabilities.
- (5) Meet state requirements for high school graduation.

Proposed law provides that each eligible pupil enrolled in a dropout recovery program shall have a written learning plan developed by the pupil's assigned mentor. The written learning plan shall include the following elements:

- (1) The start date and anticipated end date of the plan.
- (2) Courses to be completed by the pupil during the academic year.
- (3) Whether courses will be taken sequentially or concurrently.
- (4) State competency exams to be taken, as necessary.
- (5) Expectations for satisfactory monthly progress.

- (6) Expectations for contact with the pupil's assigned mentor.

Proposed law provides that the monthly participation in a dropout recovery program shall be recorded on or before the tenth school day of each month and shall be reported to the department of education. Monthly participation calculations shall include:

- (1) Newly enrolled pupils who have a written learning plan on file on or before the first school day of the previous month.
- (2) Pupils who met the expectations for satisfactory monthly progress in the previous month.
- (3) Pupils who did not meet the expectations for satisfactory monthly progress in the previous month but did meet the expectations in the month before the previous month.
- (4) Pupils who met expectations for program reentry in the revised written learning plan in the previous month.

Proposed law provides that, because dropout recovery pupils are not expected to regularly attend classes at the district facilities, standard procedures for recording pupil attendance cannot be effectively applied to those students. For pupils participating in a dropout recovery program, an eligible pupil shall be counted as being in attendance in the school's average daily attendance calculations pursuant to subsection F of this section if the pupil meets one of the following conditions:

- (1) Is in the first month of enrollment in the program and completes the program orientation during that month.
- (2) Is enrolled in teacher-facilitated courses and meets the expectations for satisfactory monthly progress for the current or previous month.
- (3) Meets the expectations for program reentry in the revised written learning plan.

Proposed law provides that the average daily membership for pupils enrolled in a dropout recovery program shall equal the average daily attendance of the pupils. Further provides that school districts and charter schools shall be responsible for tuition charges and fees related to pupil participation in a dropout recovery program, including course materials and access to technology for use with online courses.

Proposed law provides that school districts and charter schools may contract with an educational management organization to provide a dropout recovery program. If contracting with an educational management organization, the school district or charter school shall ensure that all of the following requirements are met:

- (1) The educational management organization is accredited by a regional accrediting body.

- (2) Teachers provided by the educational management organization hold a current teaching license from any state, and teachers of core subjects are highly qualified in the subjects to which they are assigned.

Proposed law provides that dropout recovery programs shall be classified as alternative schools. Further provides that entities that are contracted to provide dropout recovery programs may conduct outreach to encourage pupils who are not currently enrolled in a school district or charter school in this state to return to school. Entities that are contracted to provide dropout recovery programs shall not conduct advertising or marketing campaigns directed at pupils who are currently enrolled in a school district or charter school, or undertake any other activity that encourages pupils who are currently enrolled in a school district or charter school to stop attending school in order to qualify for a dropout recovery program.

(Amends R.S. 17:221.4(A); Adds R.S. 17:221.6)