

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE LETTER GRADES & STATE ACCREDITATION REPEAL

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House Bill 4154

Sponsor: Rep. Ken Yonker

Committee: Education

Complete to 10-29-13

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4154 AS INTRODUCED 1-31-13

House Bill 4154 would repeal Section 1280 (MCL 380.1280) of the Revised School Code, which establishes the Michigan school accreditation program administered by the Michigan Department of Education. The bill also would establish a system of assigning letter grades to each public school and school district. A more detailed description of the bill follows.

District & School Letter Grades

House Bill 4154 requires that not later than July 1, 2014, the state school superintendent promulgate rules to establish and implement a system of assigning letter grades to each public school and school district based on their performance. The bill specifies that all of the following would apply to the letter grade system:

- The grade for each public school would be determined using the school's performance on the following factors for the immediately preceding school year:
 - *student proficiency*, based on performance on state assessments (and requiring that student proficiency be the largest factor in determining the letter grade);
 - *student growth*, based on improved student achievement on state assessments;
 - *student achievement* gaps among subgroups identified and defined by the department;
 - *college and career readiness*, as determined by the department; and
 - *other factors* identified by the department, including, but not limited to, *graduation rate* and *fiscal performance*.
- The department would assign a letter grade to each public school and school district utilizing an A, B, C, D, and F framework.
- The department could utilize or align an existing grading or accountability system if it conformed to the provisions of the bill.

- The department would seek input from stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administrators, and other education stakeholders in the development and dissemination of the letter grading system.
- The department would provide the proposed letter grade system to the Senate and House Education Committees with responsibility for education legislation at least 60 days before implementing it.

Publicizing School and District Grades

The bill requires that after implementing the letter grade system, the department annually post on its website (with a link from the homepage), and report to the Legislature, all of the following:

- Each public school's and school district's letter grade for that year and, if available, the letter grade from the previous year.
- Cut scores for state assessments.
- Annual student growth targets demonstrating different levels of improvement.
- The method used to determine the letter grades.

Further, the bill specifies that after the implementation of the letter grade system, each school district would be required to post on its website and at its central office, and to distribute to parents of all students, the letter grades for the school district, and for each public school operated by the school district for the three most recent years for which they are available.

Repeal of Current School Accreditation Program

Now under the law, the Michigan Department of Education accredits schools as having met or exceeded standards established for six areas of school operations: administration and school organization; curricula; staff; school plant and facilities; school and community relations; and, school improvement plans and student performance. The building-level evaluation used in the accreditation process includes school data collection, self-study, visitation and validation, determination of performance data to be used, and the development of a school improvement plan.

Under current law, the superintendent of public instruction annually reviews and evaluates for accreditation purposes the performance of each school that is unaccredited. Then the Department of Education and the intermediate school district within which the unaccredited school is located can, if asked to do so by the school district, provide technical assistance.

If a school is unaccredited for three consecutive years, it is subject to one or more of the following measures, as determined by the state school superintendent: an administrator of the school is appointed (at the expense of the affected school district); the parents of the students can send their children to any accredited school within the school district; the school aligns itself with an existing research-based school improvement model, or affiliates with a Michigan college or university for assistance; or, the school is closed.

House Bill 4154 would repeal Section 1280—the school accreditation section of the Revised School Code—in its entirety. In addition, the bill would amend nine other sections of the Code to eliminate all references to the state school accreditation program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have an indeterminate, though likely minimal, fiscal impact on the state and local school districts. The Michigan Department of Education could see increased administrative costs and redirection of staff time in order to create a letter grade system but would also see a reduction in staff time and administrative costs due to the elimination of the school accreditation system. Additionally, local school districts may see a reduction in administrative staff time devoted to maintaining school accreditation.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.