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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jeanne C. Johnston.

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## DIGEST

Nevers (SB 83)

Proposed law requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), effective for students entering the ninth grade for the 2015-2016 school year and thereafter, to create and issue a single, standard high school diploma.

Proposed law requires BESE to establish multiple pathways to earning a standard high school diploma and to establish separate course and other graduation requirements for each diploma pathway.

Proposed law requires BESE to create differentiated diploma endorsements to be placed on the face of the standard diploma to recognize each diploma pathway. Further requires the board to establish at least two diploma endorsements that recognize distinctive student achievement in academic and career-technical education coursework.

Proposed law requires BESE to allow a student to pursue multiple pathways and earn multiple endorsements in accordance with his talents, interests, and postsecondary goals as contained in his individual graduation plan.

Proposed law requires BESE to sustain the diploma structure and requirements as prescribed on the effective date of proposed law for students who enrolled in high school prior to the 2015-2016 school year, and to allow such students the option to earn a high school diploma pursuant to the provisions of proposed law.

Proposed law requires BESE to adopt rules to implement proposed law in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

Present law (R.S. 17:2925) requires students to develop an individual graduation plan by the end of the eighth grade to guide them through high school and specifies that such plan include the course sequence necessary to earn either a career diploma or a standard high school diploma. Further provides that the plan be reviewed annually and updated or revised as needed, be sufficiently flexible to allow the student to change his program of study, and be signed by the student and his parent or other legal guardian.

Proposed law essentially retains the provisions of present law but provides as follows:

- (1) Deletes references to multiple high school curricula and graduation requirements and instead refers to a student's chosen diploma pathway.
- (2) Provides that a student's initial graduation plan will detail the courses to be taken during

the student's first two years of high school and shall be reviewed annually and revised as needed to guide the student's progression to earning a standard high school diploma.

Present law (R.S. 17:183.1-183.5) provides for the High School Career Options Program as follows:

- (1) Allows students to choose either an academic major (college preparatory) leading to a standard high school diploma, or a career major (academic courses and career-technical courses) that leads to a career diploma.
- (2) Requires students, by the end of 8th grade, to develop a "Five-Year Individual Graduation Plan".
- (3) Requires a student to pursue the curriculum for his chosen major as approved by BESE throughout high school, but allows students to change from one major to another at the end of any school year.
- (4) Requires a career major to be linked to postsecondary options; to prepare students to pursue a degree or certification from a postsecondary institution, an industry-based training or certification, an apprenticeship, the military, or immediate entrance into a career field; to be primarily designed for students not initially college bound; and to provide such students with alternatives to immediate entrance into a four-year institution after graduation. Provides that when available and appropriate, students pursuing such a major may participate in dual enrollment with an institution under the management and supervision of the LCTCS board or a business internship or work-study program.
- (5) Requires a student seeking to pursue a career major diploma curriculum to meet one of the following conditions:
  - (a) The student has fulfilled all requirements established by BESE and the local public school board for promotion to 9th grade.
  - (b) The student is at least 15 or will turn 15 during the upcoming school year and has scored at least approaching basic on either the English/Language Arts or Math component of the 8th grade LEAP test and meets criteria established by the local school system's pupil progression plan to enter the 9th grade for the purpose of pursuing 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 complete summer remediation satisfactorily must complete developmental courses (for credit) as deemed necessary to be prepared to undertake the coursework required for his chosen career major.
- (6) 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

the following requirements:

- (a) Such student must have earned a cumulative grade point average of 1.5 on a 4.0 scale for coursework required for completion of the 8th grade.
  - (b) Such student must have demonstrated acceptable attendance and behavior standards as determined by BESE.
  - (c) Such student must participate in a BESE approved dropout prevention and mentoring program, developed in consultation with school guidance personnel, during his first year in high school.
- (7) Requires a student seeking to pursue a career major 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 student's best interest.

Proposed law repeals present law.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:2925(A), adds R.S. 17:7.8, repeals R.S. 17:183.1-183.5)