
DIGEST

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Smith

HB No. 584

Abstract: Provides standards for virtual schools and supplemental online instruction.

Proposed law provides relative to standards for virtual schools and supplemental online instruction as follows:

Standards

Requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to adopt rules and regulations establishing the standards for virtual schools and supplemental online instruction. Provides that the rules and regulations shall include but not be limited to the establishment of quality standards in specified areas for students, teachers, and programs.

Reporting

Requires each virtual school governing authority annually to report certain performance data to BESE. Requires that the report include student academic achievement levels and growth, average student daily attendance, graduation rates, teacher evaluation plans, certification status of all instructional staff, and other specified information. Provides that the reports shall be subject to the Public Records Law. Requires virtual schools to comply with all reporting and data submission requirements required of city, parish, and other local public schools.

Audits

Requires each virtual school to submit an independent financial audit to BESE. Provides time lines for such submission and provides for information to be included in the audits such as all revenue and expenses, all contracts with outside entities, the state funding reimbursement generated by each course, the assets and liabilities of the virtual school, and other specified information. Provides that the audits shall be subject to the Public Records Law.

Teachers

Requires teachers to meet specified criteria including holding a valid teaching certificate and holding a content specialization for each subject taught. Provides that teachers shall be subject to evaluation and termination in the same manner as provided for public school teachers in present law. Further provides that teachers be given employee benefits including but not limited to health insurance coverage.

Supplemental online instruction

Requires BESE to include supplemental online instruction options offered by local education providers in school and district accreditation decisions. Provides that the approval and oversight of supplemental online instruction shall be the responsibility of the city, parish, or other local public school board. Requires local boards to ensure that certain conditions are met including that the curriculum and assessments comply with state content standards, instructional personnel meet the qualification criteria, and exams are administered in a proctored environment.

Other requirements

Provides that students in virtual learning environments shall be held to the same standards as students in traditional classroom environments with regard to prohibiting cheating and plagiarism. Requires each virtual school and supplemental online instruction program to ensure that students meet present law compulsory attendance requirements. Provides that students take the state-mandated assessments with their traditional classroom peers. Further requires that virtual schools comply with all other state laws applicable to city, parish, and other local public schools.

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

(Adds R.S. 17:4051-4056)