
DIGEST

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Schroder

HB No. 993

Abstract: Provides relative to high school career options for students with exceptionalities (except gifted and talented students) including requirements for Individual Graduation Plans, pupil progression, and graduation and for the issuance of a high school diploma to such students.

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). 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. 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. 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.

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 and provides for applicability of present law to students with exceptionalities as defined in present law (R.S. 17:1942(B), except gifted and talented students). Provides for determinations relative to pupil progression and graduation requirements to be made by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. Provides for involvement by the IEP team in the development and review of an Individual Graduation Plan. Provides that students with exceptionalities shall be afforded the same opportunities to pursue a high school diploma and to exit with all course credits, honors, and financial awards as other students. Specifies that such students are not guaranteed a diploma and have to meet either the standard requirements or those established by his IEP team to be awarded a diploma. Provides that a student who successfully completes his IEP requirements shall be issued a high school diploma.

Proposed law requires that the school performance scores calculations include the percentage of students with exceptionalities whose IEP teams determine are not required to meet the state-established benchmarks on the required state assessments for grade promotion compared to the total student population. Provides that a diploma issued to a student with exceptionalities based on achieving his IEP goals and objectives shall count equally and be assigned the same number of points in the school performance score calculation for high schools as are assigned for a student with a regular diploma.

Provides that a student with exceptionalities who is on grade level and has met state-established performance standards on the required state assessments shall have promotion and graduation requirements that maintain his performance on grade level expectations as demonstrated by performance on the required state assessments. Further provides that under extenuating circumstances, a student's IEP team may determine that a student who has previously met state-established benchmarks on the required state assessments shall not be required to meet state-established performance levels as conditions for promotion or graduation. Provides that if an IEP team determines that state-established requirements for academic proficiency on the required state assessments are no longer a condition for performance or graduation for a student, the team shall:

- (1) Determine appropriate individualized assessments to measure student proficiency on academic competencies and establish minimum score requirements.
- (2) Provide the student and his parent or legal guardian with information related to how requirements that vary from standard expectations may impact future educational and career options.

- (3) Provide reasons for the extenuating circumstances as to why the student is not required to meet state-established benchmarks on the required state assessments. Extenuating circumstances shall include but are not limited to significant mental or medical changes, regressive conditions, and family structure.

Proposed law requires the state Dept. of Education to track the performance of students with exceptionalities across school systems and, in collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, establish indicators to identify school systems with disproportionately high rates of students with exceptionalities performing below expected levels and declines in performance across subgroups of students with exceptionalities. Further requires the department to develop and implement a monitoring and corrective action system to address school systems identified as having high rates of students with exceptionalities performing below expected levels.

(Amends R.S. 17:183.2(B)(1) and (C), 183.3(B)(3) and (D)(1)(a) and (b)(i) and (ii), and 2925(A)(2); Adds R.S. 17:183.3(D)(1)(b)(iii)(dd) and (E))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill.

1. Exempts gifted and talented students from proposed law applicability.
2. Requires that the school performance scores calculations include the percentage of students with exceptionalities who are not required to meet the state-established benchmarks for grade promotion. Provides that a diploma issued to a student based on achieving his IEP goals and objectives shall count equally and be assigned the same number of points in the school performance score calculation for high schools as are assigned for a student with a regular diploma.
3. Provides that if an IEP team determines that state-established requirements for academic proficiency on the required state assessments are no longer a condition for promotion or graduation for a student, the team shall take certain actions including determining appropriate individualized assessments to measure student proficiency on academic competencies and establishing minimum score requirements.
4. Requires the state Dept. of Education to track the performance of students with exceptionalities and establish indicators to identify and implement a monitoring and corrective actions system for school systems with disproportionately high rates of students with exceptionalities performing below expected levels.