
Appropriations Committee

HB 2140

Brief Description: Relating to K-12 education funding.

Sponsors: Representatives Sullivan, Dolan and Thai.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates the K-12 Education Funding Act.

Hearing Date: 4/1/19

Staff: James Mackison (786-7104).

Background:

Public schools in the state are funded by state, local and federal revenue sources. State funding is provided to support the program of basic education, as defined by the Legislature. To determine how much funding is provided for public schools, the state uses a prototypical school formula defined in statute, which reflects the costs of providing basic education.

School District Enrichment Levies.

In addition to state funding, local school districts may collect excess levies, including enrichment levies. Enrichment levies must be used only for enrichment beyond the state's program of basic education. The Legislature limits the amount school districts may collect through their enrichment levies. New limits on enrichment levy collections took effect in 2019, limiting districts to the lesser of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in the district or \$2,500 per pupil. Enrichment levy rates per student vary by district. The per-pupil enrichment levy limit is adjusted annually for inflation.

Prior to 2019, levy limits were determined by the district's levy base and levy percentage, also referred to as a "lid." The district's annual levy base was the total of its state and federal funding for the prior school year, adjusted for inflation, and additionally calculated amounts that were

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added to the levy base, sometimes referred to as "ghost money." The levy lid for most school districts was 28 percent, with some districts "grandfathered" at a higher levy percentage.

Local Effort Assistance.

Local Effort Assistance (LEA) allocations, also known as levy equalization, are provided in proportion to the ratio of a school district's actual enrichment levy compared to the maximum enrichment levy. To qualify for LEA, a school district must have a maximum enrichment levy that is less than \$1,500 per pupil. Local Effort Assistance is provided on a per-pupil allocation basis so that the sum of levy funding and LEA for a qualifying district levying the maximum rate is \$1,500 per pupil. Local Effort Assistance is not part of the state's program of basic education. The maximum LEA per pupil rate is adjusted annually for inflation.

Prior to 2019, school districts were eligible for LEA if they had a higher than average levy rate and if the district had certified a local excess levy. Levies were equalized up to 14 percent of the levy base, half of the 28 percent levy lid that applied to the majority of districts.

Special Education.

The state allocates funding for a program of special education for students with disabilities. Special education is funded on an excess cost formula for up to 13.5 percent of a district's students, which multiplies the district's base allocation for students enrolled in special education by an excess cost multiplier of 0.9609. Beyond these allocations, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) may provide safety net funding if a district has one or more high-cost students, or if a district is in a community that draws a larger number of families with children in need of special education, such as a community with group homes or military bases.

Paraeducators.

A paraeducator is a classified school district employee who works under the supervision of a certificated or licensed staff member to support and assist in providing instructional services to students and their families. Paraeducators are not considered certificated instructional staff.

Fundamental Course of Study. School districts must provide a four-day fundamental course of study on the state standards of practice to paraeducators who have not completed the course. School districts must use best efforts to provide the fundamental course of study before the paraeducator begins to work with students and their families, and at a minimum by the specified deadlines. However, school districts must only provide the course in school years for which state funding is appropriated specifically for this purpose and only for the number of days that are funded by the appropriation.

General Courses. Paraeducators may become eligible for a General Paraeducator Certificate by completing the four-day fundamental course of study and an additional 10 days of general courses on the state paraeducator standards of practice. Paraeducators are not required to meet the General Paraeducator Certificate requirements unless state funding is provided for the fundamental and general courses.

Summary of Bill:

The bill creates the K-12 Education Funding Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 28, 2019.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.