
Education Committee

HB 1176

Brief Description: Concerning access to higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Paul, Boehnke, Kloba, Callan, Davis, Dolan, Riccelli, Bergquist, Lekanoff and Shewmake; by request of State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the allowance for school districts to withhold grades and transcripts of a student who is responsible for damaging school property, or property belonging to a contractor of the district, an employee, or another student.
- Removes the authority of public and private schools to withhold a transferring student's official transcript due to: (1) an unpaid fine or fee for damaging school property or property belonging to other specified parties; or (2) unpaid tuition, fees, or fines at an approved private school.

Hearing Date: 1/26/21

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Property Damage by Students and Associated Penalties.

If school property, or property belonging to a contractor of the district, an employee, or another student, has been lost or willfully cut, defaced, or injured, the school district may withhold the grades, diploma, and transcripts of the student responsible for the damage or loss until the student or the student's parent or guardian has paid for the damages.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

If the student is suspended, the student may not be readmitted to the school until the student or the student's parent or guardian has made payment in full or until directed by the superintendent of schools.

A student who is suspended for damaging a district or contracted school bus may not enter or ride any school bus until the student or the student's parent or guardian has paid in full for the damages or until directed by the superintendent.

If the student and the student's parent or guardian are unable to pay for the damages, the school district must provide a program of voluntary work for the student in lieu of the payment of monetary damages. Upon completion of the voluntary work, the student's grades, diploma, and transcripts must be released. The student's parent or guardian is liable for damages as otherwise provided by law.

School districts may not assess penalties on a student for damaging school property, or property belonging to a contractor, an employee, or another student, until the board of directors has adopted policies to ensure the protection of students' due process rights.

Enrolling Students in Different Districts - Withholding Transcripts.

If a student who is enrolling in a different school has not paid a fine or fee for defacing or injuring school property, or tuition, fees, or fines at an approved private school, the sending school may withhold the student's official transcript. The sending school, however, must transmit information about the student's academic performance, special placement, immunization records, records of disciplinary action, and history of violent behavior or other specified offense.

If the official transcript is withheld because of unpaid tuition, fees, or fines, the enrolling school must notify both the student and parent or guardian that the official transcript will not be sent until the financial obligation is met, and that failure to have an official transcript may result in failure to graduate or exclusion from extracurricular activities.

Summary of Bill:

Property Damage by Students and Associated Penalties.

A school district may only withhold the diploma, not the grades or transcript, of a student who is responsible for damaging school property, or property belonging to a contractor of the district, an employee, or another student.

School and school bus readmittance requirements are modified. The requirement that prohibits school districts from readmitting suspended students until the student or the student's parent or guardian has made payment in full for the damages, or until directed by the superintendent of schools, is repealed. Provisions barring students who have damaged a district or contracted school bus from entering or riding any school bus until the student or the student's parent or guardian has paid in full for the damages, or until directed by the superintendent, are also repealed.

Requirements for school district penalty policies related to student property damage are modified. School districts may not withhold a student's diploma for damaging school property or property belonging to a contractor, an employee, or another student, until the board of directors has adopted policies to ensure the protection of students' due process rights.

Terminology changes are made. Statutory references to "pupil" are changed to "student," and references to "voluntary work" are changed to "community service."

Enrolling Students in Different Districts - Withholding Transcripts.

Public and private schools may no longer withhold a transferring student's official transcript due to: (1) an unpaid fine or fee for damaging school property or property belonging to other specified parties; or (2) unpaid tuition, fees, or fines at an approved private school.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 25, 2021.

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