
Education Committee

HB 2476

Brief Description: Concerning waivers from the one hundred eighty-day school year requirement.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, Santos, Magendanz, Chandler, S. Hunt, DeBolt, Blake, McCabe, Reykdal, Tharinger, Dent, Hawkins, Rossetti, Muri, Haler and Hargrove.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the State Board of Education (SBE) to continue granting waivers to school districts from the 180-day minimum school year requirement by eliminating an August 31, 2017 expiration of its authority to issue waivers.
- Deletes a provision specifying that all waivers to the 180-day minimum school year requirement granted to school districts by the SBE expire on August 31, 2017.

Hearing Date: 1/25/16

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

The State Board of Education (SBE), the 16-member board charged with providing advocacy and strategic oversight of public education, has limited authority to grant waivers from a statutory requirement specifying that each school year must consist of no less than 180 days. Waivers from the 180-day requirement granted by the SBE must be for purposes of school district economy and efficiency, and may not reduce the minimum student instructional hours required by law.

A school district seeking a waiver to the 180-day school year requirement must satisfy numerous application criteria, including providing:

- an explanation and estimate of the economies and efficiencies to be gained from compressing the instructional hours into fewer than 180 days;

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- an explanation of how monetary savings from the proposal will be redirected to support student learning;
- an explanation of the impact on employees in education support positions and the ability to recruit and retain employees in education support positions; and
- other information that the SBE may request to assure that the proposed flexible calendar will not adversely affect student learning.

In accordance with evaluation criteria adopted by the SBE, the SBE may grant waivers to five or fewer districts, and the maximum term of the waiver may not exceed three years. Of the five waivers that may be granted, two must be granted to school districts with student populations of less than 150 students, and three must be granted to school districts with student populations of between 151 and 500 students.

After each school year, the SBE must analyze empirical evidence to determine whether the reduction is affecting student learning. If the SBE determines that student learning is adversely affected by the issuance of a waiver, the school district must discontinue the flexible calendar as soon as possible but no later than the beginning of the next school year following the determination.

The authority of the SBE to issue waivers to school districts from the 180-day requirement expires on August 31, 2017, and all waivers issued by the SBE expire on August 31, 2017.

Summary of Bill:

The authority of the SBE to grant waivers to school districts from the 180-day minimum school year requirement is preserved without expiration. A provision specifying that all 180-day school year waivers granted to school districts by the SBE will expire on August 31, 2017 is deleted. Non-substantive technical changes to the underlying statute are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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