



Senate Education Committee

Senator Mike Folmer
Chairman

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BILL SUMMARY

House Bill 1718, Printer's No. 2953
Prime Sponsor: Representative Aument

SYNOPSIS:

House Bill 1718 amends the Public School Code to provide for an online education initiative.

BILL ANALYSIS:

House Bill 1718 amends the Public School Code to require the Department of Education to establish an online clearinghouse of online courses for students enrolled in grades 6-12.

For courses to be included in the clearinghouse, the department must create an application and application process. The application must include criteria for online courses that are either related or non-related to the Keystone Exams and are aligned to the state academic standards. The department may establish fees for reviewing applications, including \$75 for certification and \$750 for the review process. These fees must be deposited into the Online Course Clearinghouse Restricted Account to maintain the clearinghouse. In establishing the clearinghouse, the department must create an online database of courses. The database must include information on each course, course content, grade levels, feedback, course rating and allow for communication between the users and providers of the courses. The department must first offer free online courses and supplementary instruction for all Keystone Exam content areas by the 2015-2016 school year. Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, the clearinghouse shall also include approved online courses available for purchase from providers.

School entities, nonpublic schools and home education programs may enter into contracts with providers for courses in the clearinghouse. The contracts must include direct negotiation of the purchase price, payment and contract terms, a 60% payment limitation until a student completes a course, information on refund policies and processes for contesting payment amounts.

Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, each school entity may offer its students the opportunity to participate in online courses. The school entity shall determine how the instruction is delivered, establish policies and

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procedures for student eligibility and participation and ensure parents and students are aware of the online learning opportunities.

The bill also creates a discipline and appeal process for providers that intentionally submit false or misleading information. The provider shall be banned from the clearinghouse for five years and is subject to fines up to \$1,000 per application.

The bill also requires the Secretary of Education to submit reports to the Governor and the House and Senate Education Committees in 2019 and 2021 on the clearinghouse. Further, the State Board of Education may promulgate regulations necessary to implement the legislation.

Effective Date: 60 days.