



Senate Education Committee

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BILL SUMMARY
Senate Bill 172, Printer's No. 458
Prime Sponsor: Washington

Summary

This legislation establishes the Pennsylvania MESA Initiative.

Analysis

Senate Bill 172 establishes and creates the Pennsylvania MESA Initiative. MESA stands for Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement.

This bill creates the program within the Pennsylvania Department of Education and seeks to increase exposure, educational motivation and achievement of students in science, engineering and mathematics. The legislation calls on the Department of Education to coordinate the efforts of the Commonwealth agencies that relate to MESA education from the kindergarten level through the graduate level to avoid unnecessary duplication of initiatives.

Senate Bill 172 calls on the Department of Education to work with the TEAM PA Foundation and the five established STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) regions across the Commonwealth to create an infrastructure for the MESA Initiative in each region. The Department is tasked with:

- Developing annual goals and objectives for improving MESA programs throughout the Commonwealth.
- Coordinating and facilitating communication and cooperation among the MESA regions and assure compliance with guidelines.
- Conducting an ongoing inventory and assessment of the effectiveness and coherence of efforts within the MESA regions.
- Evaluating on an annual basis the progress and success of the MESA regions at achieving the goals and objectives of the MESA programs.
- Consulting with Commonwealth agencies when developing policies and initiatives relating to MESA.

- Strengthening partnerships between the national MESA community, Federal, State and local governments, as well as relevant international partners.
- Conducting an annual meeting on the status of the MESA Initiative.

This bill also sets up the State MESA Commission to oversee the advancement of mathematics, engineering, science and technology education. The commission, which is to meet at least quarterly, consists of no fewer than two representatives from each MESA region and elected officials, representatives of the Department of Education and other stakeholders as appointed by the Governor.

Annually, the commission must evaluate and report to the General Assembly on the efficacy of Statewide MESA Initiatives, effective utilization of MESA Initiative resources, the influence of the MESA Initiative on student STEM aptitudes, teacher effectiveness and STEM-based employment within MESA regions. The commission is also tasked with proposing a budget for the MESA Initiative aligned with goals of the program.

This legislation takes effect in 60 days.

Amendment A02818

This amendment is technical and makes language changes aimed at streamlining and clarifying the intent of the prime sponsor. The amendment also places the Commission under the State Board of Education's Council for Basic Education.