

HB 636 -- Persistence to Graduation Fund

Sponsor: Holsman

This bill creates the Persistence to Graduation Fund in the state treasury to be administered by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The fund, to be supported by at least a \$5 million annual appropriation, will provide grants for certain school districts to reduce the number of dropouts. Eligible districts will be those that have not met the indicated graduation rate on their most recent annual performance review or those who have been classified or received an annual performance score consistent with unaccredited or provisionally accredited or are classified as interim accredited by the State Board of Education.

The department must give preference to holistic strategies including collaborative approaches; early intervention; increased accountability; and starting or expanding core strategies like mentoring, alternative education, or before- or after-school programs, among others.

The grants will be from one to five years and may be renewed. If a grant is not successful or is being misused, the department may stop further payments on 30 days' written notice.

The department is required to report annually by January 15 to the Governor and General Assembly on the grants awarded and graduation information from the grant recipients.

The provisions of the bill will expire six years from the effective date.