

HB 1174 -- School Accreditation

Sponsor: Lair

This bill changes the laws regarding school accreditation by authorizing the State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish an alternative governing structure for a failing school district. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Removes the two-year period between the classification of a district as unaccredited and the time when the district will lapse and specifies that the district will lapse on a date determined by the state board. The state board may establish conditions under which the existing school district board may continue to govern or it may determine an alternative governing structure for the district;

(2) Changes the timing and the purpose of the hearing that the department must hold in the unaccredited district regarding the accreditation status of the district;

(3) Changes the procedure for the appointment of a special administrative board to allow the state board to determine the number of members and the board's duties and repeals the current provisions regarding the membership and duties of the board;

(4) Allows the state board to determine an alternative governing structure which must include a rationale for the decision and a review and recertification of the alternative form of governance every three years, a method for the residents of the district to provide comment, expectations for progress on academic achievement which includes an anticipated timeframe for the district to reach full accreditation, and annual reporting to the General Assembly and the Governor on an unaccredited district including a review of the effectiveness of the alternative governance; and

(5) Repeals the provisions requiring a provisionally accredited and an unaccredited school district to develop a plan to divide the district if it cannot attain accreditation within three years.