

HB 1374 -- School Accreditation

Sponsor: Neth

This bill changes the laws regarding school accreditation. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Specifies that the score on any assessment test of certain students from unaccredited districts will not be counted until the student has been in an accredited school district for three full school years;

(2) Removes the two-year waiting period between the time the State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education declares a district as unaccredited and the time a district lapses, changes the requirements for the hearing to be held before the district lapses, and provides minimum standards for creating an alternative form of governance;

(3) Creates a transformational school district upon the second declaration of unaccredited status within 15 years of any urban school district containing part of a city of at least 400,000 people. The transformational school district's authority resides with the city with the largest population in the school district, and the mayor must appoint the district's chief executive officer and, with the approval of the state board, may dismiss the officer. The chief executive officer will appoint a chief academic officer and a chief financial officer, whose qualifications are described in the bill. The bill specifies the powers and duties of the transformational district;

(4) Requires the approval of the voters of the district after at least four years of governance for the continuance of the transformational district. If approval is denied, the elected school board resumes governance on July 1 after the election; and

(5) Revises the conditions under which a receiving district for students of an unaccredited district will receive transfers by basing building capacity determinations on square footage and by implementing the transfers at the beginning of the school year after the effective date of the declaration of unaccredited status.

The bill contains an emergency clause.