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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6472

BILL NUMBER: SB 338

NOTE PREPARED: Feb 26, 2013

BILL AMENDED: Feb 21, 2013

SUBJECT: Chronic School Absenteeism.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Kruse

FIRST SPONSOR: Rep. Behning

BILL STATUS: As Passed Senate

FUNDS AFFECTED: **GENERAL**
DEDICATED
FEDERAL

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: (Amended) This bill has the following provisions:

Absenteeism: The bill requires the Department of Education to provide resources and guidance to school corporations concerning evidence-based practices and effective strategies to reduce absenteeism. It makes changes to the definition of: (1) chronic absenteeism; and (2) habitual truant.

It requires school corporations and schools to identify contributing factors to absenteeism and to develop chronic absence reduction plans.

It provides that a school corporation's strategic and continuous school improvement plan must include objectives relating to the educational needs of students who are chronically absent or habitually truant from school.

Reporting: The bill provides that a school corporation must include the number of students who are habitually truant in the school corporation's annual performance report.

Study Committee: The bill requests the legislative council to establish a study committee to examine issues related to absenteeism.

The bill also makes conforming amendments.

Effective Date: (Amended) Upon Passage; July 1, 2013.

Explanation of State Expenditures: (Revised) *Absenteeism:* The bill's requirements are within DOE's routine administrative functions and should be able to be implemented with no additional appropriations, assuming near customary agency staffing and resource levels.

Under the bill, DOE would be required to make absenteeism a priority, to direct school corporations and schools to identify contributing factors of absenteeism, and to develop programs to reduce it. As part of this effort, DOE would provide to corporation and schools resources and guidance on evidence based practices and effective strategies that reduce absenteeism in schools.

Study Committee: The bill requests the Legislative Council to establish a study committee during the 2013 legislative interim to examine following issues relating to absenteeism:

- (1) The development of definitions of excused and unexcused absences from school.
- (2) The effectiveness of voluntary agreements between school corporations and courts having juvenile jurisdiction in providing court supervised educational programs, alternative programs, or diversion programs for students who are habitually truant, suspended, or expelled from school. The number and types of agreements and programs in Indiana, the effects of these programs on parents and students, and the success of the programs in reintegrating students into the classroom would be studied.
- (3) Evidence based practices and model programs for reducing absenteeism and supporting student engagement and achievement.
- (4) Any other issues related to student absenteeism.

Interim study committees operate on budgets established by the Legislative Council based on committee size. Legislative Council resolutions in the past have established budgets for interim study committees in the amount of \$9,500 per interim for committees with fewer than 16 members, and \$16,500 for committees with 16 members or more.

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: (Revised) *Absenteeism; Reporting:* School corporations and schools should be able to accomplish this task within existing resources.

School corporations and schools, under the direction of DOE, would have to identify contributing factors of absenteeism and develop programs to reduce it. These plans and programs would be incorporated in the continuous school improvement plans of corporations and schools. In particular, the continuous improvement plan must address how the corporation or school would educate students who are chronically absent or habitually truant.

Corporations must include the number of students who are habitually truant in their annual performance report.

Additional Information:

Absenteeism: Current law defines both chronic absenteeism and habitual truancy as being absent from school for more than 10 days within a school year without being excused. This bill, however, redefines both conditions and has a more stringent standard for chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is defined as being absent from school for 10% or more of the school year (18 days minimum for a 180-day school year) for any reason; habitual truancy, under the bill, is defined as being absent 10 days or more within a school year without being

excused or without being absent under a parental request that has been filed with the school.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: Department of education.

Local Agencies Affected: School corporations; Public and nonpublic schools.

Information Sources:

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