

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Academic and Financial Performance Evaluation of Schools

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Overview

Similar ongoing evaluations in Pennsylvania and Michigan were initiated to help taxpayers, educators, school boards, and state and local education officials make informed decisions about how best to improve student achievement and the management of school systems. The proposed evaluation process includes an analysis of academic and financial indicators and trends, establishes comparative benchmarks, and offers impartial findings on the performance of school districts and school sites.

Section

- 1 **Schools' academic and financial performance evaluation; independent contractor.** (a) Directs the commissioner of children, families and learning to contract with an independent school evaluation services contractor to evaluate and report on the academic and financial performance of Minnesota school districts using six core categories of analysis:
 - (1) school district expenditures;
 - (2) students' performance outcomes based on multiple indicia including students' test scores, attendance rates, dropout rates and graduation rates;
 - (3) return on resources to determine the extent to which student outcomes improve commensurate with increases in district spending;
 - (4) school district finances, taxes and debt to establish the context for analyzing the district's return on resources under clause (3);
 - (5) students' learning environment to establish the context for analyzing the district's return on resources under clause (3); and
 - (6) school district demographics to establish the socioeconomic context for analyzing the district's return on resources under clause (3).
- (b) Directs the contractor to use the six core categories of analysis to:
 - (1) identify allocations of baseline and incremental school district spending;

- (2) connect student achievement with expenditure patterns;
- (3) track school district financial health;
- (4) observe school district debt and capital spending levels; and
- (5) measure the return on a school district's educational resources.

(c) Directs the contractor to evaluate and report on the academic and financial performance of all school districts.

(d) Requires the contractor complete its written report and submit it to the commissioner within 360 days of the date on which the contract is signed. Directs the commissioner to immediately make the report available to state and local elected officials, members of the public, educators, parents and other interested individuals. Requires the commissioner, upon receiving an individual's request, to make available all draft reports prepared by the contractor, consistent with Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13, governing government data practices.

- 2 **Appropriation.** Appropriates an unspecified sum from the general fund in fiscal year 2001 to the commissioner of children, families and learning for contracting with an independent school evaluation services contractor to evaluate and report on the academic and financial performance of school districts.
- 3 **Effective date.** Makes sections 1 and 2 effective July 1, 2001.