

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

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**Subject:** Provisions Affecting Students Diagnosed with ADD or ADHD

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### Overview

Ritalin is a medication prescribed for children with an abnormally high level of activity or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The medication stimulates the central nervous system. Although experts do not fully understand how it works, Ritalin is believed to have a calming effect on hyperactive children and to help children diagnosed with ADHD focus. Some people argue that children, including children who are not diagnosed with ADHD, are encouraged to take Ritalin, not because they need it, but because of its calming effect and its impact on children's concentration.

### Section

- 1 **Suspension.** Precludes school administrators from obligating a parent in a readmission plan to provide sympathomimetic medication to the parent's child as a condition of the child being readmitted to school after being suspended. This section is effective immediately.
- 2 **Special education information.** Directs colleges and universities with approved teacher preparation programs to include in the programs information on special education laws, teaching strategies, and positive behavior interventions. This section is effective for the 2002-2003 school year.
- 3 **Staff development revenue.** Includes pre-service and in-service education for special education professionals and paraprofessionals among the list of activities for which staff development revenue is available.
- 4 **School district obligations.** Requires an individual education plan team, when developing a student's individual education plan, to consider positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports that address behavior for children with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This section is effective immediately.
- 5 **Initial action; parent consent.** (b) Permits a parent, after consulting with health care, education or other professional providers, to agree or disagree to provide the parent's child with sympathomimetic medications unless the section governing emergency treatment applies. This

section is effective immediately.

- 6 **Truancy programs and services.** (b) Declares that a parent's refusal to provide the parent's child with sympathomimetic medications does not constitute educational neglect. This section is effective immediately.
- 7 **Presumptions regarding truancy or educational neglect.** (b) Declares that a parent's refusal to provide the parent's child with sympathomimetic medications does not constitute educational neglect. This section is effective immediately.
- 8 **Definitions.** Indicates that a parent's refusal to provide the parent's child with sympathomimetic medications is not part of the definition of educational neglect under the law governing maltreatment of minors.
- 9 **Study; appropriation.** Appropriates \$50,000 from the general fund in fiscal year 2002 to the commissioner of children, families and learning for contracting with a qualified expert to report, consistent with data practices laws, the number and overall incidence rate of Minnesota school children, by age, grade level, gender and race, diagnosed with ADD or ADHD currently taking sympathomimetic medications such as Ritalin. Directs the contractor to determine the number and overall incidence rate of students not identified with ADD or ADHD currently taking sympathomimetic medications such as Ritalin. Encourages the contractor to examine the number of children who take sympathomimetic medications at home and not at school, the previous interventions tried with children taking sympathomimetic medications, the types of practitioners who prescribe sympathomimetic medications and what pressures families have experienced in terms of providing their children with sympathomimetic medications. Requires the commissioner to report to the legislature by February 15, 2002. This section is effective July 1, 2000.