

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

Adult basic education (ABE) programs provide academic instruction for persons over age 16 who do not otherwise attend school. The purpose of the instruction is to enable students to obtain high school diplomas or equivalency certificates. ABE programs are offered both by some school districts and by nonprofit organizations. A program may be a part of a group of programs called a consortium.

The ABE formula is based on contact hours, population, the enrollment of students with limited English proficiency, and the number of adults age 20 or older with no diploma residing in a district. The formula caps the growth of state total ABE aid by setting in statute an overall statewide revenue limit. The program also caps an individual program's growth.

ABE programs are funded with state aid and federal funds. For FY 13, the ABE appropriation is roughly \$46 million. A district or an organization offering an ABE program may charge a sliding fee to program participants.

This bill allows a program or consortium that has had its ABE activities significantly disrupted by a natural disaster or other outside force to request that the commissioner of education use the average contact hours for the past two years in place of the current year's contact hours.

- 1 Service disruption.** Defines "service disruption" as the loss of student contact time due to a natural disaster or a disruption caused by a third party if that disruption causes the consortium to lose more than ten percent of its contact hours for the year or causes an individual program to lose more than 15 percent of its contact hours for the year.
- 2 Contact hours.** Authorizes the commissioner of education to adjust a program or consortium's hours due to a service disruption.
- 3 Contact hours in cases of disruption of services.** Authorizes a program or consortium that has had a service disruption to request that the commissioner of education adjust its contact hours. Requires the program or consortium to demonstrate to the commissioner's satisfaction that the loss of contact hours was outside of the program or consortium's control and that the consortium took reasonable actions to avoid the loss of service hours.