

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

Federal financial aid for college-bound high school dropouts was eliminated in 2012. Previously, students without a high school diploma or GED who wanted to attend a two-year college could get federal grants and loans by taking a basic skills test to demonstrate their “ability to benefit” from a college education or by successfully completing six credits. To reduce federal Pell Grant spending, these two options were eliminated as of July 1, 2012. Now, newly enrolled students need a high school diploma or GED to receive federal financial aid. Opponents of this change argued it would negatively affect older students and immigrants seeking job training. Also, in January 2014, Minnesota will implement a new computer-based GED assessment that includes tougher standards. At that time, anyone who has not passed all GED tests (in reading, writing, math, science, social studies) must retake the entire GED test.

The bill directs the education commissioner, after considering recommendations from an advisory task force, to adopt rules establishing a standard adult high school diploma. The purpose of the diploma is to allow adult basic education program participants to demonstrate proficiency in a standard set of competencies sufficient to ensure that post-secondary programs and institutions and potential employers regard persons holding a standard high school diploma and persons holding a standard adult high school diploma to be equally prepared and qualified graduates.

Section

- 1** **Standard high school diploma for adults.** (a) Directs the education commissioner to adopt rules for providing a standard adult high school diploma to persons who are not eligible for

Section

K-12 services, do not have a high school diploma, and successfully complete a commissioner-approved adult basic education program of instruction needed to earn an adult high school diploma.

(b) Requires adult basic education program participants to demonstrate proficiency in a standard set of competencies sufficient to ensure that post-secondary programs and institutions and potential employers regard persons holding a standard high school diploma and persons holding a standard adult high school diploma to be equally well prepared and qualified graduates. Requires approved adult basic education programs to issue a standard adult high school diploma to qualified persons.

Makes this section effective July 1, 2014.

- 2** **Standard adult high school diploma advisory task force.** (a) Directs the education commissioner to appoint a nine-member advisory task force to recommend programmatic requirements for adult basic education programs leading to a standard adult high school diploma.
- (b) Directs the commissioner to appoint representatives from identified organizations with expertise in adult basic education and employment to the task force by July 1, 2013.
- (c) Directs the commissioner to convene the task force. Prohibits task force members from receiving compensation or reimbursement for task force activities. Directs the commissioner to provide technical assistance to the task force upon request.
- (d) Directs the task force by February 1, 2014 to submit to the commissioner its recommendations on providing a standard adult high school diploma to qualified persons. Directs the commissioner to consider these recommendations when adopting rules under section 1.

Makes this section immediately effective.