

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

**FILE NUMBER:** H.F. 685  
**Version:** As introduced

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**Authors:** Bly and others

**Subject:** Establishing alternative routes to a standard diploma for students who are at-risk of not graduating and off-track to graduate

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### Overview

Includes in Minnesota's educational accountability system prevention and intervention strategies for at-risk students and successful recuperative and recovery or re-enrollment strategies for off-track students. Establishes a group of interested stakeholders and experts to make recommendations to the commissioner and the legislature on reporting differentiated graduation rates, the success and costs that school districts, charter schools, and alternative program providers experience in identifying and serving these students, and alternative routes to a standard diploma.

### Section

- 1 State growth target; other state measures.** (e) Directs the education commissioner, beginning July 1, 2015, to identify and report measures that demonstrate the success of school districts, charter schools, and alternative program providers in improving the graduation outcomes of students who are at-risk of not graduating and students who are off-track to graduate. Requires the commissioner to annually report summary data on:
- (i) the four and six-year graduation rates of these students, including students who participate in an alternative program or the graduation incentives program; and
  - (ii) the success that school districts, charter schools, and alternative program providers experience in identifying at-risk and off-track students, providing successful prevention and intervention strategies for at-risk students, and providing successful recuperative and recovery or re-enrollment strategies for off-track students.

## Section

For purposes of paragraph (e), defines a student who is at-risk of not graduating as an 8th or 9th grade student who meets one or more criteria:

- first enrolled in an ELL program in 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade and may be older than other students in the same grade;
- as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, is absent for at least 20 percent of school days, is 2 or more years older than other students in the same grade, or fails multiple core academic courses; or
- as a 9<sup>th</sup> grader, fails multiple 9<sup>th</sup> grade core academic courses.

For purposes of paragraph (e), defines a student who is off-track to graduate as a student who meets one or more criteria:

- first enrolled in an ELL program in high school and is older than other students in the same grade;
- is a returning dropout;
- is 16 or 17 and two or more academic years off-track to graduate;
- is 18 or older and two or more academic years off-track to graduate; or
- is 18 or older and may graduate within one school year.

Makes paragraph (e) applicable to data collected in the 2014-2015 school year and later and reported annually beginning July 1, 2015, consistent with the recommendations the commissioner receives from recognized and qualified experts under section 3.

- 2** **Implementing differentiated graduation rates and exploring alternative routes to a standard diploma for at-risk and off-track students.** (a) To implement section 1, directs the education commissioner to convene a group of recognized and qualified experts on improving differentiated graduation rates and establishing alternative routes to a standard high school diploma for at-risk and off-track students. Directs the commissioner to assist the group, upon request, to explore and recommend to the commissioner and the legislature (1) research-based measures that demonstrate the academic success of and the costs to school districts, charter schools, and alternative program providers in improving the graduation outcomes of at-risk and off-track students and (2) state and local options for establishing alternative routes to a standard diploma, consistent with Minnesota's statewide educational accountability system and the statutes governing the graduation incentives program and other alternative programs. Directs the group, when proposing alternative routes to a standard diploma, to identify highly reliable variables that generate the summary data, including: who initiates and approves a request for an alternative route; parameters for the alternative route process, including whether a student must first fail a state exam; the comparability of the academic and achievement criteria in the alternative and standard routes for a standard diploma.

**Section**

(b) Directs the commissioner to convene the group's first meeting by September 15, 2013. Includes as group members representatives of parents and educators affiliated with alternative program providers, on-line learning providers, alternative schools, charter schools, University of Minnesota and MnSCU faculty, school superintendents and principals, and the public. Allows the group to seek input from interested stakeholders and organizations with expertise to inform the group's work. Directs the group to meet quarterly. Denies group members compensation or reimbursement of expenses for participating in the group. Causes the group to expire on February 16, 2014.

(c) Directs the group to develop and submit to the commissioner and the education committees of the legislature recommendations and legislation to implement section 1 by:

- measuring and reporting differentiated graduation rates for at-risk and off-track students and the success and costs that school districts, charter schools, and alternative program providers experience in identifying and serving at-risk and off-track students; and
- establishing alternative routes to a standard diploma.

Makes this section effective immediately and applicable to school performance report cards beginning July 1, 2015.