

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Travel abroad programs for Minnesota secondary school students

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Overview

Requires school districts, charter schools, and student travel abroad program providers to report information about the programs and locations where Minnesota students died or were hospitalized while participating in a travel abroad program. Requires student travel abroad program providers to register with the Minnesota secretary of state. Requires the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota secretary of state to annually post aggregated student travel abroad data. Prohibits schools from disclosing student directory information unless a travel abroad program provider registers with the secretary of state. Appropriates unspecified general fund amounts in fiscal year 2016 to the commissioner of education and to the secretary of state to implement this legislation.

Section

1 Organization application for registration.

Subd. 1. Placing high school students in Minnesota. Contains existing law directing the Minnesota secretary of state's office to register international student exchange visitor placement organizations.

Subd. 2. Placing Minnesota students in travel abroad programs. (a) Directs school districts and charter schools with enrolled students who participate in a travel abroad program under an agreement with a travel abroad program provider to annually report to the education department on: the number of Minnesota student deaths that occurred while the students were participating in the program; the number of Minnesota students hospitalized due to accidents or illness while the students were

Section

participating in the program; and the program and location where the death or hospitalization occurred.

(b) Directs school districts and charter schools to ask but not require students and families to disclose the information listed under paragraph (a).

(c) Allows school districts and charter schools to supplement the information they provide to the education department. Directs the education department to aggregate the reported data, to post the data on the department Web site, and to include links to federal information about conditions abroad that may affect students' safety and security and to report on sexual assaults and other criminal acts.

(d) Encourages school districts and charter schools with enrolled students who participate in a travel abroad program under an agreement with a travel abroad program provider to adopt program policies and standards to ensure students' health and safety.

(e) Requires travel abroad program providers to annually register with the Minnesota secretary of state and to provide specific information to the secretary of state. Directs the secretary of state to file a program provider's complete registration and declares that program provider registered. States that registration does not mean secretary of state endorses the program. Directs the secretary of state to annually publish on its Web site the same aggregated student travel abroad data posted by the Department of Education.

(f) Requires program providers annually by August 1 to provide the student travel abroad data listed under paragraph (a) to school districts and charter schools with enrolled students participating in the provider's program.

(g) Declares that school districts, charter schools, the Department of Education, and their employees are immune from civil and criminal liability when acting in their official capacity under this subdivision.

Makes this section effective for the 2015-2016 school year and later.

- 2 **Directory information.** (b) Prohibits schools from disclosing directory information to a program provider that places Minnesota students in a travel abroad program unless the program provider is registered with the secretary of state's office.

Makes this section effective for the 2015-2016 school year and later.

- 3 **Appropriation; travel abroad program oversight.** Appropriates an unspecified general fund amount in fiscal year 2016 to the commissioner of education to collect and report aggregated student travel abroad data. Allows unexpended funds to carry forward into the next fiscal year.

- 4 **Appropriation; travel abroad program registration.** Appropriates an unspecified general fund amount in fiscal year 2016 to the Minnesota secretary of state to register student travel abroad program providers. Allows unexpended funds to carry forward into the next fiscal year.