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Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Jarrells and Hillyer

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SUMMARY

- Establishes the Supplemental School Year Program to provide high school students enrolled in public and chartered nonpublic schools in the 2020-2021 school year with the opportunity to retake or supplement the grades or courses they completed during that school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Requires public and chartered nonpublic schools to replace course grades on students' transcripts with the grades received for those courses that are retaken or supplemented through the program.
- If a public or chartered nonpublic school is a member of an organization that regulates interscholastic athletics, requires the school to petition that organization for up to two additional semesters of eligibility for students participating in the program.
- Entitles the bill "The 2020-2021 High School Education Recovery Act."
- Declares an emergency.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Supplemental School Year Program – overview

The bill establishes the Supplemental School Year Program to provide students enrolled in public and chartered nonpublic schools with the opportunity to retake or supplement the grades or courses they completed during the 2020-2021 school year, regardless of whether they received passing grades in those courses, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the program, these schools must replace course grades on students' transcripts with the grades received for those courses that are retaken or supplemented.

To be eligible for the program, students must have been enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in a public or chartered nonpublic school for the 2020-2021 school year.¹

Application process

The bill requires an eligible student who wants to participate in the program to submit a request to the school district, community school, STEM school, or chartered nonpublic school in which the student is enrolled for the 2021-2022 school year or from which the student graduated in the 2020-2021 school year. The request must be submitted not later than 30 days after the bill's effective date and must identify the courses that the student wants to retake or supplement.²

Not later than 30 days after receiving one or more requests to participate in the program, the district or school must determine whether to accept any or all of the requests it receives. If it accepts one or more requests, it must do all of the following:

- Develop a plan for implementing the supplemental school year for students who submitted requests, including a temporary program for students who graduated in the 2020-2021 school year;
- If a student requests to supplement one or more courses, determine which course or courses offered by the school are similar to the ones completed by the student in the 2020-2021 school year that the student wants to supplement; and
- Notify the Department of Education, not later than 15 days after accepting one or more requests and submit its plan for the supplemental school year to the Department along with any requests for waivers from state mandates that are necessary to implement its plan.

As part of developing its plan, a district or school may adopt policies on grades, schedules, classifications, graduation ceremonies, and other operation issues for offering the supplemental school year.³

Requirements for program participation

Under the bill, a student must be enrolled full-time while participating in the program. The student may retake courses and take supplemental courses under the program and may take any other courses the student selects, subject to the requirements of the student's school district or school.⁴

¹ Section 1(A), (B)(1), and (C)(4) and (5).

² Section 1(C)(1).

³ Section 1(C)(2), (3), and (5) and (D).

⁴ Section 1(A)(2).

Additionally, the bill specifies that, although retaking a course under the program counts towards the full-time enrollment of a student participating in the program, that course must not count as an additional credit towards graduation unless the student failed the original course.⁵

Participation in interscholastic athletics

If a school district or school is a member of an organization that regulates interscholastic athletics, it must petition that organization during the 2021-2022 school year for up to two additional semesters of athletic eligibility for students participating in the program. If students are granted additional semesters of eligibility, the students remain subject to all other eligibility requirements of the organization for participation in interscholastic athletics.

Moreover, the bill specifies that retaking courses under the program must not, at any time, disqualify students from participation in interscholastic athletics.⁶

Replacement of grades on student transcripts

The bill requires the school district or school that a student attends through the program to replace grades on the student's transcript that the student received for the 2020-2021 school year as follows:

- If the student retakes one or more courses through the program, replace the grade or grades on the student's transcript for the original course or courses with the grade or grades the student receives for the retaken course or courses.
- If the student supplements one or more courses through the program, replace the grade or grades on the student's transcript for the original course or courses with the grade or grades the student receives for the course or courses determined to be similar by the district or school.⁷

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	05-18-21

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⁵ Section 1(A)(3).

⁶ Section 1(E).

⁷ Section 1(C)(4) and (5).