



Legislative Council Staff

Research Note

Version: Final

Date: 5/25/2016

Bill Number

House Bill 16-1222

Sponsors

*Representatives Rankin and
Tyler
Senators Todd and Hill*

Short Title

*Suppl Online Education &
Blended Learning Resources*

Research Analyst

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Status

This research note reflects the final version of the bill, which becomes effective upon the signature of the Governor.

Summary

The bill increases the state's financial investment in supplemental online education courses and blended learning support for public schools, districts, and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

Under current law, the state designates a BOCES to contract with one or more nonprofit providers of supplemental online education resources, who in turn provide those services to schools and districts. This bill creates the Supplemental Online and Blended Learning Program and requires that the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) designate a BOCES to design and articulate a statewide plan for supplemental online and blended learning, and to lead, manage, and administer that statewide program. The bill identifies some minimum goals for the program, and authorizes funding from the State Education Fund, in addition to any other funding source the General Assembly may choose.

The administering BOCES is required to ensure that all schools in the state have access to supplemental online and blended learning resources, professional development for teachers, and consulting assistance. The BOCES is also required to actively market the program, and may enter into an agreement with the Statewide Internet Portal Authority (SIPA) to provide a platform for accessing services.

Under current law, the designated BOCES issues a request for proposals to select nonprofit

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providers for supplemental online education. Proposals are reviewed by a committee convened by the BOCES to help select and award contracts. This bill modifies the composition of that review committee. Finally, the bill authorizes the designated BOCES to use up to ten percent of the annual appropriation for administrative expenses and to design and lead a statewide program to promote supplemental online learning.

Background

Blended learning is defined by the Colorado Department of Education as "a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace and at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home." The section of state law pertaining to online courses and blended learning was passed in 2007, and requires a BOCES to contract with a nonprofit organization to manage and coordinate the state's efforts in this area.

The nonprofit organization currently managing the state's online courses and blended learning is Colorado Online Learning (COL). COL reports that in the 2013-14 school year, it registered 931 course enrollments from 66 schools, districts, and BOCES. These students had a 99 percent completion rate, with 86 percent earning passing grades. Seventy-five percent of these students live in rural Colorado.

Additionally, several school districts run their own online learning programs, although CDE does not track enrollment in these courses.

House Action

House Education Committee (March 7, 2016). At the hearing, the Commissioner of Education and representatives of Colorado Digital Learning Solutions, the Colorado Digital Board of Cooperative Educational Services, E-learn Collaborative, the Poudre School District, and private citizens testified in support of the bill. The committee adopted amendments L.004 and L.005 and referred the bill to the House Appropriations Committee. Amendment L.004 defines blended learning and local public education agency, adds a five year review of the administering BOCES, and clarifies the provisions of the bill pertaining to the role of the administering BOCES. Amendment L.005 defines small, rural school district and adds two educators to the review committee.

House Appropriations Committee (April 28, 2016). The committee adopted amendment J.001 and referred the bill to the House Committee of the Whole. The amendment adds an appropriations clause to the bill.

House second reading (April 28, 2016). The House adopted the House Education and Appropriations committee reports. The House passed the bill on second reading with no amendments.

House third reading (April 29, 2016). The House passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.

Concurrence (May 10, 2016). The House concurred with Senate amendments to the bill.

Senate Action

Senate Finance Committee (May 3, 2016). The committee adopted amendment L.006 and referred the bill, as amended, to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Amendment L.006 made technical changes to the way online schools and programs apply to expand the grade levels they serve.

Senate Appropriations Committee (May 5, 2016). The committee postponed the bill indefinitely.

Senate Appropriations Committee (May 6, 2016). The committee reconsidered its vote to postpone the bill indefinitely and referred the bill to the Senate Committee of the Whole.

Senate second reading (May 6, 2016). The Senate adopted the Senate Finance and Appropriations committee reports, and passed the bill on second reading with no amendments.

Senate third reading (May 9, 2016). The Senate adopted amendment L.010, which added a statement about equitable access to the bill. The Senate passed the bill on third reading with no additional amendments.