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EDUCATION

SENATE FILE 2086

BY ANGELO

Passed Senate, Date _____ Passed House, Date _____
 Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____ Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____
 Approved _____

A BILL FOR

1 An Act providing for an alternative method of accreditation for
 2 public and nonpublic schools.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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S.F. 2086

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. 256.11C ALTERNATIVE
2 ACCREDITATION PROCESS.

3 1. As an alternative to the accreditation standards and
4 procedures in section 256.11, section 256.11A, and the rules
5 adopted by the state board to implement those standards and
6 procedures, the department shall recommend rules for adoption
7 by the state board pursuant to chapter 17A that provide for
8 the establishment by the department of an alternative process
9 for accrediting public and nonpublic schools by the school
10 year that begins July 1, 1999.

11 2. By January 15, the board of directors of a school
12 district or the authorities in charge of a nonpublic school
13 may notify the department of its intent to seek accreditation
14 under the alternative accreditation process for the next
15 following school year, and shall submit to the department a
16 comprehensive education program plan that meets the
17 requirements established by the department pursuant to rules
18 adopted by the state board and does all of the following:

19 a. Establishes results-based academic measurements of
20 learning for students according to local needs. The academic
21 measurements shall include, but are not limited to, academic
22 measurements for reading, writing, mathematics, science, and
23 speaking. The academic measurements shall be developed with
24 collaborative input by parents, students, educators, and
25 business, labor, and community representatives.

26 b. Specifies testing or assessment methods to measure the
27 progress of all students in achieving results-based academic
28 measurements. However, no public school student may be
29 assessed or tested on personal values, attitudes, or beliefs.
30 Nonpublic school students may be assessed on personal values,
31 attitudes, or beliefs, but these tests shall not be used for
32 any accreditation purposes. The district or school shall
33 establish for at least one interval at the elementary level,
34 for at least one interval at the middle school level, and for
35 high school graduation, the following measures, based on the

1 results from the tests or assessments administered by the
2 school or district:

3 (1) Minimum levels of proficiency for advancement or
4 graduation. The minimum levels of proficiency shall be
5 limited to the academic measurements for reading, writing, and
6 mathematics.

7 (2) Levels of excellence for students to earn a
8 certificate of achievement. The levels of excellence shall
9 include, but are not limited to, excellence levels in reading,
10 writing, and mathematics.

11 The district or school may establish alternative standards
12 or academic measurements for special education students.

13 c. Describes the criteria for advancement or graduation of
14 special education students if the school district has
15 established the alternative criteria.

16 d. Describes the means by which the district or nonpublic
17 school will do all of the following:

18 (1) Describe the assignment of instructional staff and
19 provide for professional staff development consistent with the
20 local results-based academic measurements of learning.

21 (2) Describe the schedules, calendars, and support
22 services to be implemented to support the accomplishment of
23 the local results-based academic measurements.

24 (3) Describe the assessment methods to be used to measure
25 results-based academic measurements of student achievement.
26 Assessments shall be objective, measurable, and, in part,
27 standardized.

28 e. Provides for instructional staff to be licensed at the
29 early childhood, elementary, secondary, special education, or
30 administrative level appropriate to their assignment as
31 provided in chapter 272.

32 f. Addresses the attainment of the student achievement
33 goals provided in sections 280.12 and 280.18. The
34 comprehensive education program plan may be submitted by the
35 district or nonpublic school to the department in lieu of the

1 annual report required by sections 280.12 and 280.18.

2 g. Addresses and is consistent with a phase III plan filed
3 under section 294A.16. The phase III plan shall be included
4 as a part of the comprehensive education program plan.

5 3. School districts and accredited nonpublic schools may
6 seek accreditation under this section for the district or one
7 or more attendance centers within the district or under the
8 control of authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic
9 school.

10 4. Before adopting local results-based academic
11 measurements, a school district or school seeking
12 accreditation under this section shall submit a copy of the
13 proposed academic measurements to the parent, guardian, or
14 legal custodian of each student enrolled in the school
15 district or school by mail or through the student, and shall
16 hold at least one public hearing to accept public comment on
17 the proposed academic measurements.

18 5. The department shall notify districts and nonpublic
19 schools by March 1 if the comprehensive education program plan
20 proposed for the following school year complies with the
21 requirements of this section. If notified by the department
22 that the plan complies with this section, the district or
23 nonpublic school may begin accreditation under this section
24 and is not subject to the standards specified in sections
25 256.11 and 256.11A. If the district or nonpublic school
26 receives notice that the plan does not meet the requirements
27 of this section, the district or nonpublic school shall
28 continue to be accredited under section 256.11, and may submit
29 revisions to its plan by April 1 for the following school
30 year. The department shall review the revisions and provide
31 notice to the district or nonpublic school of its
32 accreditation status by May 1 for the following school year.

33 6. The alternative accreditation process shall be
34 monitored by the department by the following means:

35 a. Reviewing and approving a district's or nonpublic

1 school's comprehensive education program plan described in
2 this section.

3 b. Monitoring the implementation of a comprehensive
4 education program.

5 c. Reviewing a district's or nonpublic school's annual
6 report of plan implementation results.

7 7. A parent, guardian, or legal custodian shall have
8 access, upon making a request to the school administrator, to
9 curriculum and other educational materials used in teaching or
10 testing a student, and may have access to learning plans.

11 However, tests or assessments requiring confidentiality for
12 future use shall be shown to the requesting parent, guardian,
13 or legal custodian, if the superintendent or school board
14 consents, under the supervision of a designee of the board of
15 directors of a school district or the authorities in charge of
16 a nonpublic school. A person or firm desiring to furnish
17 tests or assessments to a school district or school shall
18 agree to comply with the requirements of this section.

19 8. A school district or school seeking accreditation under
20 this section shall evaluate the effectiveness of its
21 comprehensive education program. The evaluation shall include
22 a comparison of the effects on student achievement based on
23 administration of a nationally recognized standardized
24 achievement test at selected grade levels.

25 9. Individualized information or individual test results a
26 school district or school gains by implementing this section
27 shall not be released to colleges, universities, businesses,
28 or other entities without written consent of a student's
29 parent, guardian, or legal custodian or of a student who has
30 attained the age of majority.

31 10. The district or nonpublic school accredited under this
32 section shall submit to the department and the community of
33 the district or nonpublic school an alternative accreditation
34 program annual report regarding the performance of student
35 groups at the intervals assessed. The report shall be

1 submitted at the close of each school year, but not later than
2 August 15, and shall meet the requirements established by the
3 department pursuant to rules adopted by the state board. The
4 report shall include all of the following:

5 a. Longitudinal results for groups of students by cohort,
6 gender, and ethnicity. If the longitudinal data submitted in
7 the alternative accreditation program annual report indicates
8 unsatisfactory progress in achieving the results-based
9 academic measurements adopted by the district or nonpublic
10 school, the district or nonpublic school shall submit to the
11 department a corrective academic plan to improve student
12 achievement in the district or nonpublic school.

13 b. Summary comments from reviewers selected by the
14 district or nonpublic school. Reviewers shall include, but
15 are not limited to, representatives from the following
16 entities:

17 (1) An area education agency.

18 (2) Other accredited districts or nonpublic schools,
19 including, but not limited to, a member of the instructional
20 staff.

21 (3) The department of education.

22 (4) The general public.

23 Comments by the reviewers shall address the comprehensive
24 program plan and the annual report.

25 11. If the alternative accreditation program annual report
26 submitted the year following implementation of the corrective
27 academic plan indicates to the department that the corrective
28 academic plan as required under paragraph "a" is unsuccessful,
29 the district or nonpublic school shall be required to comply
30 with and meet the standards of the accreditation process
31 pursuant to sections 256.11 and 256.11A, and the rules adopted
32 by the state board pursuant to those sections for the school
33 year that began the preceding July 1.

34 EXPLANATION

35 This bill requires the department of education to establish

1 an alternative process for accrediting public and nonpublic
2 schools by the school year beginning July 1, 1999. School
3 districts and nonpublic schools seeking accreditation under
4 the alternative performance-based process will still be
5 required to meet the requirements of Code chapter 272 for the
6 licensing of practitioners under their employ.

7 The bill details the requirements school districts and
8 nonpublic schools seeking accreditation under the alternative
9 accreditation process will be required to meet to qualify for
10 and to continue under the process. Those requirements include
11 submitting a comprehensive education program plan and an
12 alternative accreditation program annual report to the
13 department of education. The bill lists the notification
14 requirements that the department and the school districts and
15 nonpublic schools must meet under the process, and the methods
16 by which the department shall monitor the alternative
17 accreditation process. The bill also provides for parental
18 access to curriculum, learning plans, and other educational
19 materials used in teaching or testing a student, and requires
20 a participating school district or school to compare effects
21 on achievement based on administration of a nationally
22 recognized standardized achievement test.

23 Under this bill, any information or test results gained by
24 implementing the provisions of the bill cannot be released by
25 school districts or schools without the written consent of the
26 student's parent, guardian, or legal custodian or a student
27 who has attained the age of majority.

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