

House File 241 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 241

BY GJERDE

A BILL FOR

1 An Act establishing the truancy evaluation and reduction pilot
2 program to be administered by the department of education
3 and making appropriations.

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

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. 299.14 Truancy evaluation and
2 reduction pilot program.

3 1. The truancy evaluation and reduction pilot program is
4 established to be administered by the department of education.
5 The department shall work with the applicable county attorneys,
6 school districts, and truancy officers, as well as the United
7 States department of the interior and the school at the Sac
8 and Fox settlement, on issues related to truancy and student
9 absences from school.

10 2. The department of education shall do all of the
11 following:

12 a. Use the moneys appropriated under subsection 3 to employ
13 one social worker who shall work in a county with a population
14 of at least two hundred thousand residents but not more than
15 three hundred thousand residents to identify, evaluate, and
16 address cases of truancy, student absences from school, and
17 other barriers that make it difficult for students to attend
18 school as provided in this chapter, or as required by the
19 applicable school board's attendance policy.

20 b. Use the moneys appropriated under subsection 3 to employ
21 one social worker who shall work in a county with a population
22 of at least twenty-five thousand residents but not more than
23 twenty-five thousand six hundred residents, a county with a
24 population of at least seventeen thousand one hundred residents
25 but no more than seventeen thousand four hundred residents,
26 and a county with a population of at least sixteen thousand
27 six hundred residents but not more than sixteen thousand seven
28 hundred residents to identify, evaluate, and address cases of
29 truancy, student absences from school, and other barriers that
30 make it difficult for students to attend school as provided in
31 this chapter, or as required by the applicable school board's
32 or school governing body's attendance policy.

33 3. a. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, and the
34 fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, there is appropriated from
35 the general fund of the state to the department of education

1 seventy-five thousand dollars for the sole and exclusive
2 purpose of the truancy evaluation and reduction pilot program.
3 The department shall use the moneys appropriated under this
4 paragraph for one full-time equivalent position, the social
5 worker identified in subsection 2, paragraph "a".

6 *b.* For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, and the
7 fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, there is appropriated from
8 the general fund of the state to the department of education
9 seventy-five thousand dollars for the sole and exclusive
10 purpose of the truancy evaluation and reduction pilot program.
11 The department shall use the moneys appropriated under this
12 paragraph for one full-time equivalent position, the social
13 worker identified in subsection 2, paragraph "b".

14 4. The department of education, in consultation with
15 the social workers employed pursuant to subsection 2, the
16 applicable county attorneys, school districts, and truancy
17 officers, as well as the United States department of the
18 interior and the school at the Sac and Fox settlement, shall
19 prepare a report that evaluates the effectiveness of the
20 truancy evaluation and reduction pilot program. The report
21 shall include information related to the number of children
22 of compulsory attendance age in the applicable counties who
23 were deemed a truant under this chapter each school year from
24 the school year beginning July 1, 2022, through the school
25 year beginning July 1, 2024. The report shall include a
26 discussion of barriers that make it difficult for students to
27 attend school as provided in this chapter, or as required by
28 the applicable school board's attendance policy, as well as
29 recommendations for eliminating those barriers. The report
30 shall also include recommendations related to whether and under
31 what conditions the truancy evaluation and reduction pilot
32 program should be extended or expanded. The department of
33 education shall submit the report to the general assembly on
34 or before June 30, 2025.

35 5. This section is repealed July 1, 2025.

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EXPLANATION

The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

This bill establishes the truancy evaluation and reduction pilot program to be administered by the department of education.

The bill requires the department to work with certain specified persons on issues related to truancy and student absences from school. The bill requires the department to employ one social worker who shall work in a county with a population of at least 200,000 residents but not more than 300,000 residents and another social worker who shall work in a county with a population of at least 25,000 residents but not more than 25,600 residents, a county with a population of at least 17,100 residents but not more than 17,400 residents, and a county with a population of at least 16,600 residents but not more than 16,700 residents to identify, evaluate, and address cases of truancy, student absences from school, and other barriers that make it difficult for students to attend school. The bill appropriates a combined \$300,000 from the general fund to the department for FY 2023-2024 and FY 2024-2025 for the social workers.

The bill requires the department, in collaboration with the social workers and certain specified persons, to prepare a report evaluating the effectiveness of the truancy evaluation and reduction pilot program. The bill establishes the information and recommendations that are to be included in the report. The bill requires the department to submit the report to the general assembly on or before June 30, 2025.

The bill provides that the Code section establishing the truancy evaluation and reduction pilot program is repealed July 1, 2025.