

Legislative Analysis



STRICT DISCIPLINE ACADEMY AUTHORIZERS

Phone: (517) 373-8080
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House Bill 4945 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Pamela Hornberger
Committee: Education
Complete to 6-7-21

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4945 would amend the Revised School Code to modify the allowable authorizers for a strict discipline academy (SDA).

Currently, the board of a school district that operates grades K to 12, an intermediate school board (ISD), the board of a community college, or the governing board of a state public university can authorize SDAs. Under the bill, the last three categories would be retained but the first would be modified so that any board of a school district could authorize an SDA.

MCL 380.1311b and 380.1311d

BACKGROUND:

Strict discipline academies, a type of public school academy (PSA) or charter school, were incorporated into Michigan law as part of a push for school safety measures following the Columbine High School shooting in 1999. Other such measures include zero tolerance suspension and expulsion policies for certain offenses. The goal of SDAs is largely to provide education in a more controlled environment to a population that may be unable to participate in a traditional school setting. SDAs typically require metal detector checks at the school door, uniforms, and strict adherence to behavior policies.

Most recently, 2018 PA 42 (House Bill 4665 of 2017-18)¹ expanded the criteria for enrollment at SDAs to include unaccompanied or resettled minors as well as students referred by their schools or placed there by their parents (replacing the previous requirement that both occur). It also allowed students to remain at SDAs after the expiration of their suspensions or expulsions.

The following students are eligible for enrollment at a strict discipline academy.

- A student placed in an SDA by a court or by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or a county juvenile agency under the direction of a court.
- A student who was expelled for possessing a dangerous weapon in a weapon-free school zone or committing arson or criminal sexual conduct at school.
- A student in grade six or above who was expelled for committing a physical or verbal assault against a school employee, volunteer or contractor; for making a bomb threat or similar threat against the school; or under another provision of the Revised School Code.

¹ House Fiscal Agency analysis of 2018 PA 42/HB 4665 of 2017-18:
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2017-2018/billanalysis/House/pdf/2017-HLA-4665-5F50A.pdf>

- Other students who were expelled from school, or suspended for more than 10 days, and who were referred to the SDA by the student’s school or placed in the SDA by the student’s parent or legal guardian.
- A special education student who was not suspended or expelled, but whose individualized education program (IEP) team recommended placement in an SDA.
- A student who was not suspended or expelled, but who was placed in a high- or medium-security juvenile facility, mental health facility, or child caring institution that was operated by a private company.
- A student who became a resident of the state as an unaccompanied or resettled minor under the care of DHHS and who was under 22 years old as of September 1 of the current school year.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the state or on school districts, ISDs, or PSAs.

Legislative Analyst: Jenny McInerney
Fiscal Analysts: Samuel Christensen
Jacqueline Mullen
Emily Hatch

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