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MICHIGAN READS CHALLENGE ACT

House Bill 4454

Sponsor: Rep. Deborah Cherry

Committee: Appropriations

Complete to 4-14-99

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4454 AS INTRODUCED 4-13-99

House Bill 4454 would create a new act to be called the "Michigan Reads Challenge Act". The bill would establish the Michigan Reads Challenge Fund, and require the Department of Education to design a program that provides grants to eligible applicants who develop, carry out, or expand local reading programs.

Under House Bill 4454, an "eligible applicant" is defined as a consortium consisting of a school district or an intermediate school district and at least one institution of higher education or other public or private agency. A "local reading program" would have to do all of the following: help children read well and independently by the end of the third grade; serve an area with a high number or percentage of children from low-income families or with the greatest need for reading assistance; recruit and provide appropriate and effective training for tutors for after-school, weekend, or summer reading programs, or for other proven reading programs for children from preschool through fourth grade; provide an opportunity for students attending Michigan institutions of higher education with federal work-study financial aid to participate as tutors; provide federal work-study students who participate in the program as tutors with an orientation program and necessary support; use qualified and trained individuals, such as program coordinators, to organize and supervise the program and reading specialists who can train participating tutors to effectively supplement the in-school reading program; ensure that all program personnel are screened to meet state and local safety standards; build on and support the in-school reading programs for the children being served, and maintain regular communication between program staff and school personnel; make parental involvement and support a high priority, and coordinate with early-childhood and family-literacy programs such as Head Start and Even Start programs, and with related programs carried out under Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; and provide information to the public about the program's strategies for, and progress in, helping children read well and independently by the end of the third grade.

Under the bill, the Michigan Reads Challenge Fund would be created within the state treasury, and could receive money and other assets from any source. The state treasurer would direct the investments of the fund. Interest and earnings from the fund would be credited to the fund, and money in the fund at the close of the fiscal year would not lapse to the general fund. Under the bill, the Department of Education could expend money from the fund only to provide

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grants to eligible applicants for reasonable expenses that are necessary to develop, carry out, or expand effective local reading programs. For example, funds could be provided to pay for reading specialists, materials, training of tutors, and family literacy activities.

House Bill 4454 would require the department to use at least 20 percent of the money received from the federal government to provide "parents as teachers" grants to effective local family literacy programs that aim to help children become successful readers by the end of the third grade. The bill would define "parents as teachers grant" to mean a grant to develop, carry out, or expand effective local programs, such as family literacy programs, that provide appropriate support, training, and educational materials to involve and assist parents and other adult primary caregivers to help their children become successful readers by the end of third grade.

Under the bill, applicants would be required to submit an application that describes how the funds would be used to develop or expand a local reading program, and that would identify a sound fiscal agent to manage the project, such as a school district or other member of the applicant's consortium.

Analyst: J. Hunault

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.