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sSB-1458
AN ACT CONCERNING CHANGES TO THE COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK OF SCHOOLS AND ALLIANCE DISTRICT PROGRAMS.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 $	FY 27 $	FY 28 $
Education, Dept.	GF - Savings	See Below	See Below	9,869,398

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 $	FY 27 $	FY 28 $
Various Local and Regional School Districts	See Below	See Below	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill phases out the Commissioner's Network of Schools program and reforms what is currently the Alliance District program. The bill's impacts are described by section below.

Sections 1 – 2 result in a savings to the State Department of Education (SDE) in FY 26 and FY 27, which reaches $9,869,398 annually starting in FY 28, and a corresponding revenue loss to various local and regional school districts. These sections phase out the Commissioner's Network of Schools program to elimination in FY 28. In FY 25, the grant's appropriation is approximately $9.9 million and schools in 13 towns receive the grant. The sections result in a corresponding revenue loss to the school districts that may have otherwise received the grant or an extension grant, which the bill also eliminates.

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Reviewer: JS

There will be a savings to SDE in FY 26 and FY 27, and a corresponding revenue loss to various school districts, as current participants exit the program. The amount of the savings and revenue loss will equal the grants that had been provided to the exiting schools' districts.

Eliminating the Commissioner's Network of Schools will require SDE to significantly revise the federally approved Every Student succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan, which allows SDE to receive certain federal funding.

Section 3 has no fiscal impact to the state. Beginning in FY 26, it: (1) reduces the number of Alliance Districts from 36 to 15 and renames them Opportunity Districts;[1] (2) creates a new category of Legacy Alliance Districts which consists of former Alliance Districts that do not qualify as Opportunity Districts; and (3) allows the 50 lowest performing districts to request specialized interventions from SDE. This section also requires the redesignation of Opportunity Districts every two years, and designates a portion of each Opportunity District's ECS funds for certain efforts, as is currently done for Alliance Districts.

Legacy Alliance Districts will no longer be subject to certain oversight from SDE. This has no fiscal impact as it is not anticipated to alter SDE resources used to assist lower performing districts.

Sections 4 – 5 have no fiscal impact. They make conforming changes to ensure that Legacy Alliance Districts do not receive reductions in ECS funding as a result of the bill.

Section 6 makes conforming changes to the Tiered PILOT formula by replacing Alliance Districts with Opportunity Districts and Legacy Alliance Districts regarding tier status. This change does not result in a fiscal impact as there is no change between which municipalities would have otherwise been designated as tier 1.

Sections 7 – 8 result in a revenue loss to Legacy Alliance Districts and

[1] It is assumed Opportunity Districts must have at least 1,000 students and will be the 15 lowest performing districts that are currently classified as Alliance Districts.

a corresponding revenue gain to Opportunity Districts starting in FY 26. They limit eligibility for certain grants[2] to the 15 Opportunity Districts. The 21 Legacy Alliance Districts would not be eligible for these programs. This results in a revenue loss to Legacy Alliance Districts and a corresponding revenue gain to Opportunity Districts. There is no fiscal impact to the state, as the sections do not change the level of funding for these grants.

The Out Years

As described above, the full fiscal impact of the Commissioner's Network of Schools phase-out first occurs in FY 28. The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future.

[2] These are grants for: (1) new curricula, training in the use of the curricula, and related supporting textbooks and materials, and (2) a reading readiness program that provides tiered supports in early literacy.