

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5142

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 16, 2011

Title: An act relating to alternative learning experiences.

Brief Description: Regarding alternative learning programs.

Sponsors: Senators Stevens, Hargrove, Nelson, Shin, Pflug, Sheldon, King and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/27/11, 2/16/11 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5142 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Harper, Vice Chair; Litzow, Ranking Minority Member; Eide, Fain, Hobbs, King, Nelson, Rockefeller and Tom.

Staff: Juliana Roe (786-7438)

Background: Alternative learning experiences (ALE) are primarily distinguished from other public school instructional programs by off-campus instruction which can require as little as one hour of face-to-face contact per week. Students are supervised, monitored, assessed, and evaluated by certificated instructional staff. ALEs may also include significant participation by students, parents, and families in the design and implementation of a student's learning experience. The specific requirements and expectations of ALE learning activities are detailed in a written student learning plan developed and supervised by a public school teacher.

Home based instruction programs consist of planned and supervised instructional and related educational activities provided by the parent. Students of home based instruction are subject only to those minimum state laws and regulations which are necessary to insure that a sufficient basic educational opportunity is provided to the students receiving such instruction.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): School districts are prohibited from advertising or marketing full-time enrollment in an ALE as being a home-based instruction program. Full-time ALE students are full-time public school students. Part-time ALE

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students are part-time public school students. School districts that provide one or more ALE courses to a student must provide the parent or guardian, prior to the student's enrollment, with a description of the differences between home-based instruction and the enrollment option selected by the student.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): It is clarified that a school district that provides one or more ALE courses to a student is required to provide the parent or guardian, prior to the student's enrollment, with a description of the differences between home-based instruction and the enrollment option selected by the student.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: There is considerable confusion in the community regarding the difference between ALE and home based instruction programs. They are two very different systems. ALEs are set up by the public schools, whereas home based instruction is provided by the parent. This often leads to problems with non-compliance because parents fail to understand in which type of program their child is involved. In order to address this issue we believe that there needs to be full disclosure as to what exactly ALEs involve. It also needs to be clarified that ALEs are not the same as home based instruction. If this bill is adopted it will alleviate any confusion in the community.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Stevens, prime sponsor; Sandy Bryan, Scott Brannan, DiAnna Brannan, Christian Homeschool Network.