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## Education Committee

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### HB 2927

**Brief Description:** Concerning highly capable students.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Vick, Harris, Senn, Frame, Young, Muri and Kloba.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to confirm that each school district has policies and procedures to allow for the identification of children who are highly capable.
- Directs the SPI to require school districts to have systems and procedures for highly capable programs that are clearly stated and implemented by districts in accordance with specified criteria.
- Establishes new professional development requirements for teachers, principals, counselors, and others regarding highly capable students.
- Directs the SPI to disseminate guidance on referral, screening, assessment, selection, and placement best practices for highly capable programs.
- Establishes new data collection, staffing, and monitoring requirements for the SPI related to highly capable students and programs.

**Hearing Date:** 1/29/18

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

#### **Background:**

School districts are authorized to establish and operate, either separately or jointly, programs for highly capable students. These programs are part of the state's program of basic education, and supplemental funding is provided to districts for the purpose of providing enhanced learning opportunities for the most highly capable students.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

At the state level, the (Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is obligated to implement a program for highly capable students. This program may include conducting, coordinating and aiding in research (including pilot programs), disseminating information to local school districts, providing statewide staff development, and allocating to school districts supplementary funds for the additional costs of district programs.

School districts that establish and operate programs for highly capable students must adopt student identification procedures and provide educational opportunities according to requirements in state law. These requirements obligate districts, in accordance with rules adopted by the SPI, to implement procedures for nomination, assessment, and selection of their most highly capable students. Under current law:

- nominations must be based upon data from teachers, other staff, parents, students, and members of the community;
- assessment must be based upon a review of each student's capability as shown by multiple criteria intended to reveal, from a wide variety of sources and data, each student's unique needs and capabilities; and
- selection must be made by a broadly based committee of professionals, after consideration of the results of the multiple criteria assessment.

Legislation enacted in recent years has established intent and requirements related to district practices for identifying highly capable students. More specifically, legislation adopted in 2009 (chapter 548, Laws of 2009, enacted as Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2261) established legislative intent provisions related to highly capable programs and specified, in part, that:

"There are multiple definitions of highly capable, from intellectual to academic to artistic. The research literature strongly supports using multiple criteria to identify highly capable students, and therefore, the legislature does not intend to prescribe a single method."

Additionally, legislation adopted in 2017 (chapter 13, Laws of 2017 3rd special session, enacted as Engrossed House Bill 2242), modified requirements for identifying highly capable students by obligating school districts to prioritize the equitable identification of low-income students.

Students selected to participate in a highly capable program must be provided, to the extent feasible, an educational opportunity that takes into account each student's unique needs and capabilities and the limits of the resources and program options available to the district.

### **Summary of Bill:**

New duties and requirements related to highly capable students and programs are established for the SPI, with related implementation duties for school districts and school district personnel.

#### Confirmation of District Policies and Procedures/System Requirements.

The SPI must confirm that each local education agency (school district) has policies and procedures to allow for the identification of children who are highly capable.

The SPI must require districts to have systems and procedures for highly capable programs that are clearly stated and implemented using ten specified criteria, examples of which include:

- the systems and procedures used in the referral, screening, assessment, and selection of highly capable students must be implemented in a nondiscriminatory manner;
- the systems and procedures for identifying the most highly capable students must prioritize equitable identification of low-income students as required by law;
- universal screening must be conducted for all students in a grade level, using an instrument designed for that purpose, at least once at or before second grade, and again at or before sixth grade;
- districts must use multiple objective criteria to identify students who are among the most highly capable. Multiple pathways for qualifications must be available and no single criteria may eliminate a student from identification; and
- all student screening and assessments must be conducted during the regular school day and in the student's home school.

The SPI must monitor school districts' compliance with the district policies and the system and procedural requirements described above.

#### Professional Development.

The SPI is directed to require all principals, counselors, administrators, and all members of multidisciplinary selection committees to attend three or more hours of professional development each biennium on the needs of highly capable students. The purpose of this professional development is to facilitate:

- better support for teachers who have highly capable students in their classrooms; and
- active participation in the identification process by recognizing students who may be eligible for services, and to improve district practices for highly capable identification and service models.

Additional professional development requirements are established for teachers. Teachers who have one or more highly capable students in their classroom must have three or more hours of professional development per biennium (presumably on the needs of highly capable students). All other certificated and noncertificated staff are encouraged to take professional development classes on the needs of highly capable students.

#### Dissemination of Guidance.

The SPI must disseminate guidance on referral, screening, assessment, selection, and placement best practices for highly capable programs. The guidance must be regularly updated and aligned with evidence-based practices.

#### Data Collection and Staff Provisions.

The SPI is assigned new data collection and staffing obligations. With respect to data collection, the SPI must collect, disaggregate, and publicly report by subgroup, the number of students referred, universally screened, assessed, selected, and placed, as well as average, median, and standard deviation of student universal screening scores by subgroup, and the aggregate actual district spending on highly capable services. The SPI must also ensure there is appropriate staff to provide technical assistance and respond to questions from school districts regarding the requirements described above.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 25, 2018.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.