

**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT BRIEF
SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 45**

As Agreed to March 25, 2025

Brief*

Sub. for SB 45 would establish a statutory calculation, for purposes of accreditation, of the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for each school district and any schools within the district, including virtual.

Graduation Calculation Rate

The bill would require, for purposes of accreditation, a school district to calculate the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the school district and the district's schools, including virtual schools, and exclude students who:

- Had not earned sufficient credits to be expected to graduate in the same school year as the student's cohort at the time that the student transferred to and enrolled in the school or school district; or
- Were enrolled in the school or school district but subsequently transferred to a non-accredited private school in Kansas or another state.

Repealed Graduation Calculation

The bill would repeal the current statutory four-year adjusted cohort calculation for only virtual schools that is found in KSA 72-3713.

[*Note:* The current calculation is similar to the one described above but does not allow for the exclusion of students in a virtual school who transferred to a non-accredited private school.]

*Conference committee report briefs are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. No summary is prepared when the report is an agreement to disagree. Conference committee report briefs may be accessed on the Internet at <https://klrd.gov/>

Conference Committee Action

The Conference Committee agreed to the provisions of Sub. for SB 45, as recommended by the Senate Committee on Education. The Conference Committee further agreed to amend the bill to clarify which students would be excluded from the graduation rate calculation, as follows:

- Any student who had not earned sufficient credits to be expected to graduate in the same school year as the student's cohort at the time that the student transferred to and enrolled in the school or school district; or
- Any student who was enrolled in the school or school district but subsequently transferred to a non-accredited private school in Kansas or another state.

Background

The bill was introduced by the Senate Committee on Education at the request of Senator Thomas.

Senate Committee on Education

In the Senate Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by a representative of the Insight School of Kansas. The proponent stated that the bill would help virtual schools by treating a student who transfers from the virtual school to a non-accredited private school the same as if the student had transferred between brick and mortar schools by removing the students from the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. The proponent said currently those students remain as part of the cohort and so virtual schools are penalized by graduation rates appearing to be lower than they may actually be.

Opponent testimony was provided by a representative of the Kansas Association of School Boards. The opponent stated that the organization supports the authority of the State Board of Education regarding matters of accreditation. Additionally, the opponent stated that the bill would create a double standard where virtual schools would be able to calculate their four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates differently than allowed for brick and mortar schools when calculating their four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates.

Written-only opponent testimony was provided by the State Board of Education.

No other testimony was provided.

The Senate Committee amended the bill to make the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate applicable to all schools, not just virtual schools, and to remove references to "homeschooling" and placed the amended contents into a substitute bill. [*Note:* The Conference Committee retained these amendments.]

House Committee on Education

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by a representative of the Insight School of Kansas, who stated that the graduation rates of Kansas virtual schools are negatively impacted when students transfer to homeschooling or non-accredited private schools, and these graduation rates could impact the virtual school's accreditation status.

Neutral testimony was provided by a representative of the Kansas Association of School Boards, who noted the State Board of Education's authority to set accreditation standards and requested that the Committee maintain parity in how schools are treated for the purposes of accreditation.

Written-only opponent testimony was provided by a representative of the State Board of Education, who indicated the bill would require the calculation of two different graduation rates for every school district in the state: one in accordance with federal law and one under the bill.

No other testimony was provided.

The House Committee amended the bill to clarify that the graduation rate would be determined by excluding students who:

- Transferred to and enrolled in the school or district after completing grade eight and who had not earned sufficient credits to be expected to graduate in the same school year as the student's cohort at the time the student first enrolled in the school; and
- Were enrolled in the school but subsequently transferred to a non-accredited private school in Kansas or another state.

[*Note:* The Conference Committee did not retain these amendments.]

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, the State Department of Education indicates that enactment of the bill would have no fiscal effect.

Education; K-12; graduation rate; virtual schools

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