

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: HB 44

48th Legislature, 1st Session, 2007

Short Title: Establish Higher Education Dept. Divisions

Sponsor (s): Representative John A. Heaton and Others

Analyst: Kathleen Forrer

Date: January 23, 2007

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

Bill Summary:

HB 44 amends the *Higher Education Department Act* to establish the following eight divisions in the Higher Education Department (HED):

1. Administrative Services Division;
2. Planning and Research Division;
3. Financial Aid Division;
4. Public Information and Communications Division;
5. Adult Basic Education Division;
6. Information Technology Division;
7. Private and Proprietary Schools Division; and
8. Public Schools Liaison Division.

HB 44 also includes a clause that gives the Secretary of Higher Education the authority to organize HED and its divisions, and to transfer and merge functions between divisions and bureaus, "in the interest of efficiency and economy."

Fiscal Impact:

HB 44 does not contain an appropriation.

Issues:

The 2005 Legislature enacted the *Higher Education Department Act*, the purpose of which is to establish HED as a single, unified department to administer laws and exercise functions formerly administered and exercised by the Commission on Higher Education (CHE).

The *Higher Education Department Act*, among other provisions, contains language which gave the Secretary of Higher Education until the 2006 legislative session to make recommendations to the Legislature regarding how the organization of HED should be reflected in statute.

In testimony to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) during the 2005 interim, the Secretary Designee of Higher Education discussed the progress being made in transitioning the former CHE functions to HED, indicating that she would be better prepared to recommend an organizational structure once the transition was complete. During the 2006 interim, the Secretary Designee presented proposed language changes to the LESC; these changes include the eight divisions enumerated in HB 44.

Related Bill:

SB 248 *Establish Higher Education Dept. Divisions* (identical)