

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SJM 13

50th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2012

Tracking Number: .188394.1

Short Title: Study School District Admin Changes

Sponsor(s): Senator Stephen Fischmann

Analyst: Travis Dulany

Date: February 13, 2012

Bill Summary:

SJM 13 requests that the Public Education Department (PED) and the State Auditor convene a work group consisting of regional education cooperatives, superintendents, teachers, school district business staff, and other stakeholders to:

- study the feasibility of having regional education cooperatives or other joint powers agreement organizations provide certain services for public schools, such as:
 - business and fiscal recordkeeping and reporting;
 - facilities management;
 - school transportation;
 - food service operations; and
 - other functions that do not directly support the educational program;
- analyze the staffing needs required to provide these services;
- design a pilot project consisting of several school districts in one or more regional education cooperative or other joint powers agreement organizations to determine the efficacy of regional business management and accounting services; and
- report its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) and the Legislative Finance Committee by November 1, 2012.

The memorial further states that, by utilizing regional education cooperatives or other joint powers organizations, superintendents may be able to focus their duties on academics, staff development, and parental and community involvement.

Fiscal Impact:

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations.

Background:

During the 2010 interim, the LESC formed the School Finance Work Group. Among its activities, the work group investigated the availability of qualified school business officials and independent auditors, with a focus on the needs of small, rural school districts. As a result of presentations and discussions during the 2010 interim, the work group agreed that further study

was needed on how these small, rural districts could be supported through cooperative management opportunities such as business and financial services and support services from PED, and thus recommended the introduction of:

“a joint memorial requesting that PED, in collaboration with the Office of Educational Accountability¹, Regional Education Cooperatives, Cooperative Educational Services, and other stakeholders to examine the feasibility of [cooperative management opportunities] of certain business services for small school districts, such as payroll, legal services, human resources, and federal program management; and provide a report to the LESC during the 2011 interim.”

The memorial that resulted from the recommendation, HJM 11 (2011), did not pass. Nonetheless, the LESC recommends that this topic continue to be examined through this memorial, in keeping with the LESC’s focus on public school finances and efficiencies, streamlining, and enhancements therein.

Related Bills:

HJM 1 *Study School District Administration Reforms* (Identical)

¹ The Office of Education Accountability is no longer active.