
Appropriations Committee

HB 2160

Brief Description: Concerning eligibility for membership in the school employees' benefits board programs during the second school year of employment.

Sponsors: Representatives Bernbaum, Parshley, Leavitt, Reed, Santos, Zahn, Stonier, Gregerson, Reeves, Bergquist, Pollet, Donaghy and Lekanoff.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Specifies that benefits eligibility in the School Employees' Benefits Board program is presumed at the start of a school year if the school employee worked at least 630 hours in the prior school year and returns to the same type of position with any employer.

Hearing Date: 1/15/26

Staff: David Pringle (786-7310).

Background:

The nine-member School Employees' Benefits Board (SEBB) provides health care and related benefits for all eligible public-school employees and represented employees of educational service districts (SEBB organizations). The program is administered by the Health Care Authority (HCA). A school employee must be anticipated to work at least 630 hours per school year for a single SEBB organization to be eligible, unless a district elects to collectively bargain eligibility under more inclusive terms.

The HCA has developed rules to determine if employees are eligible for the employer contribution towards the cost of SEBB benefits at the beginning of each school year. There are several rules to account for employees that are returning to work for the school district in the

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same position, different positions, and for positions that are either expected or not expected to meet the 630 hour threshold in the upcoming school year.

For employees that are working in positions where the working 630 hours is anticipated at the time of hire, eligibility for the employer contribution towards coverage is when work for the school year begins. Regardless of the employer's anticipation of how many hours the employee will work in the upcoming school year, an employee is also presumed eligible for employer contributions at the beginning of the school year if the employee worked at least 630 hours in each of the previous two school years and is returning to the same type of position with the SEBB organization (teacher, paraeducator, food service worker, etc.), or a combination of positions within the same SEBB organization.

A SEBB organization may rebut this presumption of eligibility by notifying the employee of the specific reasons why they are not anticipated to work for 630 hours in the current school year and how the employee can appeal that determination.

Summary of Bill:

Employees returning to work with a School Employees' Benefits Board employer are presumed to be eligible for benefits and employer contributions if they worked for 630 hours in the prior school year and are returning to the same type of position.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 08, 2026.

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