SB548

141398-1

By Senators Beason, Sanford, Holley, Dial and Marsh

RFD: Education

First Read: 19-APR-12
SYNOPSIS: Existing law does not specifically authorize the State Department of Education to develop and implement an online distance learning program for students in grades K-12.

This bill would require the State Department of Education to establish the Alabama Virtual Instruction Program based upon a program proven successful in another state.

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED AN ACT Relating to public K-12 education; to require the State Department of Education to establish the Alabama Virtual Instruction Program; and to provide for the minimum elements of the program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. (a) The State Department of Education, pursuant to rules promulgated in compliance with the Alabama
Administrative Procedure Act, shall establish the Alabama Virtual Instruction Program. Commencing with the 2012 school year, the virtual instruction program shall make quality virtual instruction available to public school students using online and distance learning technology in the nontraditional classroom. The virtual instruction program shall provide a means for each city and county school district to provide all enrolled public school students within its boundaries options for participating in part-time and full-time virtual instruction programs offered in an interactive learning environment created through technology in which students are separated from their teachers by time or space, or both.

(b) The department shall model the Alabama Virtual Instruction Program after a program that has been proven successful in another state. At a minimum, the program shall provide for all of the following:

(1) Participation parameters for city and county school systems to satisfy before providing part-time or full-time, or both, virtual instruction programs.

(2) A means for providing each city and county school system with the flexibility necessary to provide customized virtual instruction programs that address local student needs.

(3) Continued participation by students in extracurricular activities provided by the school for which they are zoned to attend.
(4) Qualifications for approved providers that a city or county school system may contract with to provide virtual instruction programs and requirements for those contracts.

(5) Multi-district contractual agreements among city and county school systems for providing virtual instruction programs.

(6) Reporting requirements for participating city and county school systems.

(7) Virtual instruction program requirements.

(8) Eligibility for student participation.

(9) Student participation requirements.

(10) Foundation Program funding.

(11) Adherence to statewide assessment and performance accountability requirements.

Section 2. This act shall become effective on the first day of the third month following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.