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S.F. No. 2618 – Increasing access to rigorous coursework (as proposed to be amended by the A-2 amendment)

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Section 1. Advance equity in rigorous courses pilot program.

Subd. 1. Pilot program established. Establishes the pilot program to increase access to rigorous coursework in six school districts or charter schools during the 2025-2026 to 2027-2028 school years.

Subd. 2. Definitions. Provides definitions applicable to the pilot program.

Subd. 3. Automatic enrollment. Requires participating schools to adopt a policy to automatically enroll students in the pilot program. Provides certain policy requirements. Provides that a parent may opt the student out of enrollment in the rigorous coursework.

Subd. 4. Participation requirements. Requires certain teacher recruitment, parental notification, tutoring, and data collection activities of participating schools.

Subd. 5. Application process. Establishes a process for districts to apply to the commissioner of education for participation in the pilot program. Requires the commissioner to select at least one district enrolling a high percentage of American Indian students for participation, and select other participants to ensure a representative participation. Provides other selection criteria.

Subd. 6. Grant uses. Authorizes participants to use pilot program grant funds to pay for AP course fees, teacher training, textbooks, tutoring, administrative expenses, and teacher bonuses.

Subd. 7. State report. Requires that the Department of Education's rigorous course-taking report due in 2029 includes information about the pilot program. Requires certain report content.

Sec. 2. Appropriations. Appropriates money in fiscal year 2025 for the pilot program. Authorizes the commissioner to retain amounts for grant administration.