

CCS SCS SB 638 -- ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

This bill modifies several provisions relating to elementary and secondary education and includes charter schools.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (Section 160.400, RSMo)

This bill adds to the provisions relating to contracts between charter schools and their sponsors the requirement that performance consequences must be aligned with annual performance report evaluations of public schools.

The bill adds to the requirement that charter school sponsors develop policies and procedures for a performance contract to require charter schools to meet current state academic performance standards.

This bill specifies that when a sponsor notifies a charter school of closure, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) must withhold funds to assure all obligations of the charter school are met.

CHARTER SPONSORSHIP (Section 160.403)

This bill removes the Missouri Charter Public School Commission from the application and approval process to be eligible to sponsor a charter school.

The bill repeals the provision prohibiting an eligible sponsor that is not currently sponsoring a charter school as of August 28, 2012, from commencing charter sponsorship without approval from and a sponsor contract with the State Board of Education within the department.

APPLICATION AND RENEWAL PROCESS (Section 160.405)

Currently, the state board must approve a charter by December 1 of the year prior to the proposed opening date of the charter school. The bill requires the state board to approve a charter by January 31 prior to the school year of the proposed opening date of the charter school.

This bill requires a charter sponsor, after approving a charter, to prepare a statement of finding that a charter application meets statutory requirements. Such statement must then be submitted along with the application to the State Board of Education.

The state board is required to approve or deny a charter application within 60 days of its receipt. If the state board

denies a charter application, it must do so in writing and identify the specific failures of the application to meet statutory requirements. The written denial must be provided to the sponsor within 10 business days.

A charter school may have an expedited renewal process when its annual performance report is consistent with a classification of accredited for three of the last four years and is fiscally viable.

The department is required to calculate an annual performance report for each charter school and publish it in the same manner as they are calculated and published for districts and attendance centers.

This bill requires the Joint Committee on Education to create a committee, comprised of equal members of the charter school sector and the public school sector, to investigate facility access and affordability for charter schools and to report the findings to the General Assembly by December 31, 2015.

#### HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL (Section 160.408)

The bill allows high-quality charter schools, as defined in the bill, to be provided expedited opportunities to replicate and expand, subject to specified conditions, into unaccredited districts, the St. Louis City School District, or the Kansas City School District.

#### ADMISSION (Section 160.410)

This bill specifies the requirements for admission into a charter school. A charter school must enroll nonresident pupils who transfer from an unaccredited district, as described under Section 167.131, provided the charter school is an approved charter school subject to Section 167.131. If a charter school's capacity is insufficient to enroll all pupils who submit a timely application the charter school must have an admissions process that assures all applicants an equal chance of gaining admission and does not discriminate based on parents' ability to pay fees or tuition.

Currently, students who are present for the January membership are counted in the performance of the school on the statewide assessment that year. This bill specifies that students who have been enrolled in a charter school for a full academic year must be counted in the performance and removes the provision regarding student performance assessment and comparison.

#### FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS (Sections 160.415 and 160.417)

This bill requires a charter school to satisfy all its financial obligations within 12 months of notice from the charter sponsor's closure. A charter school must return any remaining state and federal funds to DESE once its financial obligations are met.

The bill specifies that a charter school will be identified as experiencing financial stress if due to insufficient fund balances or reserves, it incurs debt after January 31 and before July 1 during the most recently completed fiscal year in order to meet expenditures of the charter school.

#### APPROVED CHARTER SCHOOL TUITION (Section 167.131)

The board of education of each district in Missouri that does not maintain an accredited school is required to pay the specified tuition and provide transportation for each pupil resident who attends an accredited school in another district of the same or an adjoining county or who attends an approved charter school, as defined in the bill, in the same or an adjoining county. This bill contains a similar provision within Section 160.415.

#### TRANSPORTATION (Section 167.241)

This bill specifies when transportation must be provided and who is financially responsible.

#### A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM (Section 160.545)

This bill allows a qualifying student of a nonpublic school to be eligible for reimbursement of post-secondary education through the A+ program, as specified in the bill.

#### EARLY LEARNING QUALITY ASSURANCE (Section 161.217)

This bill establishes an early learning quality assurance report three-year pilot program in collaboration with the Missouri Head Start Collaboration Office and the departments of Health and Senior Services, Mental Health, and Social Services. The program is voluntary for any licensed or license-exempt early learning providers that are center-based or home-based and providing services for children from any ages from birth up to kindergarten.

This bill also repeals a current section on quality rating systems for early childhood education. The section prohibits certain public institutions, as described within the section, from operating or mandating participation in a quality rating system or training quality assurance system, as described within the section.

#### TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOLS INITIATIVE (Sections 161.1050 and 161.1055)

Beginning July 1, 2017, this bill establishes the "Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative." Accordingly, DESE shall provide information regarding the trauma-informed approach to all school districts, and offer training on recognizing and responding to trauma.

This bill also establishes the "Trauma-Informed Schools Pilot Program" and requires DESE to choose five schools across Missouri to receive intensive trauma-informed training regarding how to recognize and respond to the signs of trauma in students, teachers, and staff. The program will be terminated on August 28, 2019, and before December 31, 2019 the department shall submit a report to the General Assembly on the results of the pilot program. This bill also established the "Trauma-Informed Schools Pilot Program Fund," as described within the bill.

#### VACANCIES ON SCHOOL BOARDS (Sections 162.073 and 162.261)

This bill specifies that for counties without a county commission, in an instance where two or more vacancies exist on a school board, the vacancies must be filled by the county executive with the advice and consent of the county council.

#### SEVEN DIRECTOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS (Sections 162.531 and 162.541)

Currently, the law requires the treasurer of a seven-director school district, and the secretary and the treasurer of an urban district, when entering into a bond to the state, to do so with two or more sureties. This bill authorizes the treasurer or secretary to use one or more sureties.

#### GIFTED EDUCATION (Sections 162.720 and 163.031)

This bill modifies provisions relating to gifted education.

Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, a school district will incur a reduction in funding if it experiences a decrease in its gifted program enrollment of more than 20%. If a school district experiences a decrease of 20% or more in its gifted program enrollment, an amount equal to the product of the difference between the number of students enrolled in the gifted program in the current school year and the number of students enrolled in the previous school year multiplied by \$680 must be subtracted from the school district's current year payment amount. This provision does not apply to school districts with an average daily attendance of less than 350.

#### REMEDICATION PREVENTION (Sections 167.903, 167.905, and 173.750)

This bill allows each student prior to his or her ninth grade year at a public or charter school to develop a personal plan of study with help from the school's guidance counselors that must be reviewed regularly by school personnel and the student's parent or guardian and updated based on the needs of the student.

The bill requires each school district to develop a policy and implement a system by July 1, 2018, for identifying students in their ninth grade year who are at risk of not being ready for college-level work or for entry-level career positions.

Currently, the report generated pursuant to Section 173.750 cannot be used for any other purpose than as currently described. This bill does not allow the report to be used for any other purpose until such time that a standard process and specific criteria, as described within the bill, are established for determining a student's need for remedial coursework is agreed upon by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education, higher education institutions, and the State Board of Education.

Also, this bill requires:

(1) DESE to conduct a review of its policies and procedures relating to best practices in remediation identified as required by Subdivision (6) of Subsection 2 of Section 173.005 to ensure that districts are informed about best practices to reduce the need for remediation. DESE must present its results to the Joint Committee on Education by October 31, 2017; and

(2) School districts to adopt a policy to permit a waiver to students with a disability if recommended by the student's IEP (Individualized Education Program) committee.

#### DYSLEXIA SCREENING IN SCHOOLS (SECTION 167.950)

This bill requires each public school to screen students for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times in accordance with the guidelines developed by DESE. By December 31, 2017, DESE must develop guidelines for the appropriate screening of students and the necessary classroom supports. The requirements and guidelines must be consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia, which is also created by this bill.

In the 2018-19 school year and subsequent years, the school board of each district and governing board of each charter school must provide reasonable support consistent with the guidelines developed by DESE. "Related disorders" are defined as disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory

imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, practicing teacher assistance programs will include two hours of in-service training regarding dyslexia and related disorders. Each charter school must also offer all of its teachers two hours of training on dyslexia and dyslexia related disorders. Districts and charter schools may seek assistance from DESE in developing and providing such training.

MISSOURI CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE (Sections 170.011, 170.345, and 170.350)

This bill changes an exception of schools held to the requirements of Section 170.011 from "privately operated trade" schools to "proprietary" schools.

These provisions of the bill require the subject of American civics to be included in the exam required for graduation from any public or private school, other than private trade schools.

Any student entering ninth grade after July 1, 2017, who is attending a public, charter, or private school, except for private trade schools, shall pass an examination on the provisions and principles of American civics, as described within the bill.

The test will consist of 100 questions similar to the 100 questions used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and each district must adopt a policy permitting a student with a disability to receive a waiver from the basic civics test requirement if the student's IEP committee recommends it.

This bill also allows a school district to recognize a student's participation in the Constitution Project of the Missouri Supreme Court, as described in the bill.

CPR INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS (Section 170.310)

Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, upon graduation from high school a pupil in public schools and charter schools must receive 30 minutes of cardiopulmonary resuscitation instruction and training in the proper performance of the heimlich maneuver or other first aid for choking given any time during the student's four years of high school and must be included in the school district's or charter school's existing health or physical education curriculum. This bill also requires public schools and charter schools to provide such instruction to enrolled students.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE IN SCHOOLS (Section 171.021)

This bill specifies that the Pledge of Allegiance must be recited at least once per school day in schools supported by public funds. Flags for display in individual classrooms may be provided by voluntary donation by any person.

#### TASK FORCE ON DYSLEXIA (Section 633.420)

This bill creates the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia. The Task Force will advise and make recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, and relevant state agencies. The Task Force will consist of 20 members, as described in the bill and include four legislative members and the Commissioner of Education, the members will be appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Task Force will make recommendations for a statewide system for identification, intervention, and delivery of support for students with dyslexia, as described in the bill.

The Task Force will hire or contract for hire specialist services to support the work of the Task Force as necessary with appropriations or from other available funding.

The Task Force will expire on August 31, 2018 and the repeal and reenactment of Section 161.1050 will become effective July 1, 2017.