

HCS HB 1041 -- SCHOOL PERSONNEL

SPONSOR: Cunningham (86)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Education by a vote of 17 to 7.

This substitute requires successor school districts to ensure access to continuation of health care for retired teachers and employees of a district that lapses, is merged or divided, or otherwise loses its corporate structure, if the original district provided health care benefits at the time of its dissolution. The substitute permits districts to offer hiring incentives and salary schedule modifications under certain circumstances to both tenured and probationary teachers. The substitute also prohibits public school personnel from performing strip searches on students and reduces the annual requirement for bus drivers over the age of 70 to have a criminal background check. The annual re-examination remains the same, but the background check will occur every three years.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that hiring and retention incentives are necessary for attracting and keeping teachers in shortage areas, and districts should be able to offer them without fear of litigation. The possibility of a district's retirees finding themselves without health insurance if a district lapses needs to be addressed in statute.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cunningham (86); Missouri State Teachers Association; American Board for Certification of Teaching Excellence; U. S. Department of Education; Frederick Springsteel; and Missouri School Boards Association.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that incentive pay is divisive. Methods already exist to compensate teachers through extra duties and other more objectively measurable means.

Testifying against the bill were Southwestern Superintendents Association; and Missouri National Education Association.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say care must be taken when privileging one certification route over another (in reference to a part of the bill that was deleted).

Others testifying on the bill was School Administrators Coalition.

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