

CCS HS HCS SS SCS SB 968 and SCS SB 969 -- EDUCATION

This bill changes the laws regarding education.

TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Successor school districts must ensure access to the continuation of health care for retired teachers and employees of a district that lapses if the original district provided health care benefits at the time of its dissolution.

The proration factor is removed from the career ladder entitlement line in the School Funding Formula. This provision contains an emergency clause. Speech pathologists who hold both a teaching certificate and a certificate of clinical competence qualify for stage III of the career ladder program under certain circumstances.

Districts meeting certain financial criteria that place contracted teachers on leave more than 40 days after the education appropriations bill is signed must pay the teachers the greater of the salary for days worked or \$3,000. Teachers whose contracts are not renewed because of the district's financial conditions will receive notice of the reason. "Teacher" is defined for purposes of the teacher tenure law to include certificated teachers who teach at the prekindergarten level in all districts except St. Louis City. Districts will not be reimbursed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for more than one A+ Program coordinator based on the number of students.

The bill prohibits public school personnel from performing strip searches on students except under a reasonable belief of eminent harm and from requiring students to remove emblems or garments, including those with religious significance, if they are worn in a nondisruptive manner. School bus drivers over the age of 70 will continue to be re-examined annually, but the background check will occur every three years instead of annually. Interpreters for the deaf who work for schools may be granted provisional certificates in education if they have novice or apprentice credentials and a valid interpreter's license or have applied for certification and licensure and have taken the test or affirm they will complete certification and licensure procedures within a specified time. Professional development for vocational-technical teachers must include contact hours in the subject area for which the certification is sought.

STUDENTS

Students who are suspended for violence or drug-related activity

cannot be within 1,000 feet of any public school under certain conditions. Statutory rape and statutory sodomy are added to the list of offenses that preclude re-admission of students into regular classes. The St. Louis City school district is permitted to raise its compulsory school attendance age to 17 by action of the school board from school year 2007-2008 to 2011-2012. Districts may develop incentives or supplementary work as a consequence of a student's performance on the statewide assessments. The minimum admission age of 16 for students at the University of Missouri is removed.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

School district officials, like officials of other political subdivisions, are currently limited to accepting \$1,500 annually for performing services for or making sales to their district. The bill raises the amount for school board members to \$5,000. Gas tariffs for school aggregate purchases are extended to June 30, 2007. The bill clarifies that the nepotism provisions of the Missouri Constitution apply to school districts. Districts that have web sites must post their personnel manuals and student handbooks on-line.

The St. Louis City school district is permitted to use a flexible bid advertising schedule of up to every five years for its depository, instead of an annual contract as in current law. The St. Louis City school district may buy out the remaining time on a superintendent's contract; currently, a buyout is limited to the remainder of the current year.

School districts may take up to five working days rather than the current three to schedule student residency waiver admission hearings under certain conditions. School districts that permit students to claim excused absences for athletics or other extracurricular activities must let students who participate in Future Farmers of America, 4-H, and similar organized competitions to attend official activities when the board policy permits and the sponsoring school employee approves. Students in these instances may be counted for average daily attendance. Beginning with school year 2005-2006, summer school attendance must be counted for the year in which it occurs; attendance from previous years' summer school will not count. Beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, if a school district schedules 10% fewer hours for kindergarten than in the immediately preceding year, it must use the current year's pupil count. The summer school and kindergarten pupil count provisions contain an emergency clause.

ASSESSMENTS AND ACCREDITATION

The accreditation scoring rubric must not require points for the

Parents as Teachers Program, although deficiencies may be noted as an area of concern and must reward districts that use instructional technology to accomplish their advanced placement goals. Students expelled for acts of violence will not count as dropouts for accreditation purposes.

OTHER PROVISIONS

The Joint Committee on Education, which currently meets every four years, may meet in any year when the President Pro Tem of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives appoint new members. The number of members increases from five per chamber to seven, and the study of education funding is added to the committee's charge. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must seek feedback on its rules and regulations after their implementation and give priority to the review of existing regulations that could be relaxed in hard economic times without affecting student achievement. The Division of Family Services cannot meet with a child in the same school or child care facility where the abuse is alleged to have occurred. Currently, the division cannot meet with a child at any school or child care facility. This provision contains an emergency clause.