

SS SCS HB 2191 -- HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

This bill clarifies that a school district may participate in the A+ Schools Program regardless of its accreditation status by the State Board of Education if the district meets all other requirements. Two-year public and private vocational and technical schools may participate as providers in the program if they are members of the North Central Association, accredited by the Higher Learning Commission as of July 1, 2008, and are nonprofit organizations under federal tax law, unless the schools are already receiving reimbursements. Rankin Tech is the only private school known to meet these criteria. Reimbursements to private schools must not exceed the community college tuition rate for similar course work offered within the service area of a community college nor violate the constitutional provisions that prohibit the use of public funds for religious purposes.

Currently, the Kids' Chance Scholarship Fund receives a yearly \$50,000 transfer from workers' compensation premiums which is scheduled to end in 2008. The bill extends the transfers until 2018 and allows the distribution of any interest in the fund for use in scholarships as of the second Monday in October 2008.