

HCS HB 356 -- GRANTS FOR SMALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

SPONSOR: Wilson, 119 (Wallace)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Rural Community Development by a vote of 11 to 0.

This substitute increases the overall appropriation amount for small school grants from \$15 million to \$20 million with \$15 million being distributed to eligible districts in proportion to their average daily attendance during the regular school year. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2010, the substitute requires the General Assembly to appropriate to schools that have an average daily attendance of 351 to 449 students an amount per student that decreases proportionately as the average daily attendance increases.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of \$7,705,365 in FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the small schools grant is one of the better features of the new formula because it recognizes the fixed overhead expenses of small schools. Currently, if a school has an average daily attendance of 350 students, it receives its full share of the grant money. However, if a school has an average daily attendance of 351, it receives no money. This creates a great disparity between schools. The bill will fix this problem by allowing a school with an average daily attendance of 351 to receive 99% of the grant and decrease by 1% for each additional student who attends school on average daily, up to 449. This method will be more fair and aid smaller schools which are struggling.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Wallace and Guest; Missouri School Boards Association; Missouri Farm Bureau; Missouri State Teachers Association; Missouri National Education Association; and Penney Rector, School Administrators Coalition.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.