

HCS HB 1928 -- TASK FORCE ON DYSLEXIA (Burlison)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education

DYSLEXIA AND RELATED DISORDERS (Sections 161.1005 and 633.420, RSMo)

In its main provisions, the bill:

- (1) Requires, by July 1, 2017, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to employ a dyslexia therapist, licensed psychometrist, licensed speech-language pathologist, certified academic language therapist, or certified training specialist to serve as the department's dyslexia specialist who has a minimum of three years of field experience in screening, identifying, and treating dyslexia and related disorders;
- (2) Requires the department to ensure that the dyslexia specialist has completed specified training and received specified certification;
- (3) Specifies the qualifications the dyslexia specialist must possess and the responsibilities he or she will have, including assisting the department with developing and administering specified programs for school districts no later than the 2017-18 school year;
- (4) Requires DESE to provide informational material regarding dyslexia and related disorders on its website at no cost for school districts and teachers;
- (5) Establishes the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia and requires the Joint Committee on Education to provide technical and administrative support as required by the task force to fulfill its duties; however, any such support involving monetary expenses must first be approved by the chairman of the joint committee;
- (6) Requires the task force to meet at least quarterly and to advise and make recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, and relevant state agencies regarding matters concerning individuals with dyslexia, including education and other adult and adolescent services. The meetings may be held via telephone or video conference;
- (7) Requires the task force to consist of 20 members who will serve without compensation. Two must be members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House. The remaining membership is specified in the bill;

(8) Requires the task force to make recommendations for a statewide system for identification, intervention, and delivery of supports for students with dyslexia including the development of resource materials and professional development activities, which must be included in a report to the Governor and legislature and must include findings and proposed legislation. The report must be made available no longer than 12 months from the task force's first meeting; and

(9) Specifies what should be included in the recommendations and resource materials developed by the task force.

The task force authorized under these provisions will expire on August 31, 2018.

This provision of the bill is similar to HCS HB 921 (2015).

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAMS (Section 167.266)

Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, this bill permits a school board or local education agency of a charter school to establish an academic and career counseling program in cooperation with parents and the local community that is in the best interest of and meets the needs of the students in the community. School districts and local education agencies may use the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program as a resource for the development of a district or Local Educational Agency (LEA) program.

The bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop a process for recognition of a school district's academic and career counseling program established with parents and the local community, no later than January 1, 2017.

This provision of the bill is similar to HB 382 (2015) and a portion of HCS HB 1611 (2016).

SCHOOL COUNSELORS (Sections 167.265, 168.303, 168.500, 168.520, and 192.915)

These sections change the term "guidance counselor" to "school counselor" in laws relating to elementary and secondary education.

This provision of the bill is similar to HB 2428 (2016).

Trauma-Informed (Sections 161.1050 and 161.1055)

Beginning July 1, 2017, this bill establishes the "Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative." Accordingly, the Department of Elementary and

Secondary Education 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." Under said program, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall 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.

These provisions of the bill are similar to HCS HBs 2565 and 2564 (2016).