

HB 599 -- A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Hansen

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 13 to 0.

This bill modifies the A+ Schools Program by removing the requirement that the student's attendance of a public high school in the state be the three years immediately prior to graduation.

This bill contains an emergency clause.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that presently the A+ program requires students to attend for the three years immediately prior to graduation. There can be issues where students can't receive it because of being in a foreign exchange program. The change in required attendance will give more opportunity to students. The opportunity to engage in exchange opportunities can be life changing, it would be good to have a program with flexibility.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hansen; Missouri National Education Association; and the Missouri Community College Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say this is a step in the right direction. It will not affect a lot of students but helps those it does. The A+ Schools Program was initially put into place as it is because there were originally only a few A+ high schools and the thought was that participating students needed to be there for three consecutive years to get the benefits. The A+ program has changed a lot since then.

Testifying on the bill was Leroy Wade, Missouri Department of Higher Education.

This bill is similar to SB 650 (2016).