

HCS HB 739 -- ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

SPONSOR: Miller

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 12 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 0.

This bill requires full disclosure between school districts about a former employee when requested, specifically regarding any confirmed violation of a board policy related to abusive behavior toward a student. Additionally, any school, before offering employment, must contact the district or charter school that previously employed the prospective hire and request information (Section 162.068, RSMo).

The bill increases the training hours for initial school board members from 16 to 18 hours and 30 minutes, and further requires that the training include two hours and 30 minutes of sexual harassment training. Additionally, returning board members must take at least one hour of refresher training annually (Section 162.203).

This bill defines "sexual harassment" and requires that schools provide age appropriate sexual harassment training to students in grades six and up. The training will be developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Section 170.045).

The bill modifies the Open Meetings and Records Law, commonly known as the Sunshine Law, to allow for sharing of records between schools for employees, as specified in the bill (Section 610.021).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill builds on past measures, giving schools an active role in recognizing and preventing abuse and protecting Missouri children. The hope is that through this bill the trend of offenders being passed from district to district can stop, and schools can be safe places for students.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Miller; Missouri Kids First; and Cara Gerdman, Kids' Harbor, Incorporated.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others provided a witness sheet without a written testimony.

Testifying on the bill was the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.