

HCS SB 122 -- HEALTH IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SPONSOR: May (Pollitt)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administration Oversight by a vote of 6 to 1.

This bill provides that a child may be excused from attendance at school if the child is unable to attend school due to mental or behavioral health concerns, provided that the school receives documentation from a mental health professional.

The bill requires that the current one-half credit hour of health education be renamed "Health and Family Education" beginning with the 2024-25 school year. The State Board of Education (SBE) will convene a work group to develop academic performance standards, which shall include educators, representatives from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and nonprofit organizations with a focus on public health, parenting, and social services. The State Board of Education shall adopt and implement the performance standards relating to health education for the 2024-25 school year and all subsequent school years.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the Senate Perfected version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that healthy students are important and one out of six students suffer from mental health or behavior concerns. There are multiple emotional and psychological problems that students face and if a student is not up to the challenge of the day, schools should have a policy that excuses them based on a doctor's note. Mental health issues should not be an embarrassment to a student.

Testifying in person for the bill was Senator May.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under "House Testimony on Senate Bills" on the House website.