

HB 1905 -- ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS

SPONSOR: Hurlbert

The bill defines a "Family-Led Educational eXperience (FLEX) school" or "FLEX school" as a school that meets certain criteria that also apply to home schools, except that a FLEX school may enroll students who participate in the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program or activities offered by a public school district.

The definition of "home school" is modified to exclude students who participate in such Program or activities. The bill modifies certain provisions of law to include FLEX schools in provisions that also apply to home schools. The bill also modifies the definition of "qualified schools" in provisions relating to the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program to include FLEX schools instead of home schools. However, any state laws or regulations that apply to the Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program shall not apply to FLEX school students who do not participate in such Program.

The bill specifies that no state agency shall have regulatory oversight or rulemaking authority over FLEX schools unless such oversight or authority is specifically delegated under state law. Public schools, state agencies and employees, and certain private entities shall not refer to FLEX schools or to publicly funded programs, including but not limited to virtual school programs, as home schooling. Additionally, public schools, state agencies and employees, and certain private entities shall not refer to students who are enrolled in an attendance center of a public school district, including full-time virtual school programs, students who receive education funding from the state of Missouri, or students who participate in the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program, as home schooled students.

The bill prohibits school districts from being a member of any activity association that restricts FLEX school or virtual school students in participating in school activities. Districts may establish attendance policies for rehearsals, practice, and training sessions and enforce an academic and discipline policy.

The bill provides an attendance excuse for students that are unable to attend due to mental or behavioral health concerns, provided that the school receives documentation from a mental health professional.

The bill repeals a section of law that provides for school attendance officers.

This bill is similar to HCS SS SCS SB 411 & 230 (2023).