

HB 2937 -- STUDENT OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

SPONSOR: Davidson

This bill establishes the "Student Opportunity Savings Accounts Program". The purpose of the Program is to provide direct payments to "eligible pupils" for "qualified expenses" at an "approved education entity" as those terms are defined in the bill.

The bill establishes two separate funds for the purposes of distribution of the Constitutional requirement that 25% of general revenue be allocated for education. The created funds are entitled the "Student Opportunity Savings Accounts Program Fund" and the "School District Per-Pupil Payments Fund". The bill requires that 8% of the allocation be distributed directly to the Classroom Trust Fund established in Section 163.043 to supplement teacher salaries.

The remaining allocation will be distributed based on the pupil data provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to the State Treasurer who will use the pupil data to calculate a per-pupil payment based on the total number of gifted, special education, eligible pupils, and full-time and part-time resident pupils. .

Eligible pupils participating in the Program will receive a semiannual per pupil payment to the pupils individual student opportunity savings account for qualified education expenses. Money remaining in the pupil's account will remain and upon graduation may be used for costs related to higher education, trade school, or an in-State first home purchase.

Disbursement of per pupil payments by the treasurer's office will occur on a monthly basis to school districts and charter schools for any students that attend their resident school district or charter school and are not enrolled in the program. Such per pupil payment amounts will be based on enrollment and weighted for special education and gifted pupils.

Pupils enrolled in the Program must take an annual State approved pupil assessment to satisfy Federal requirements. Requirements for educational entities to be determined a qualified school are specified in the bill (Section 163.431 RSMo.).

This bill modifies Section 167.037 by removing requirements related to "home school" and creates Section 167.012 with the term "home school" defined. This Section prohibits home school students from participation in the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Program under Sections 166.700 to 166.720 and the Student Opportunity Savings Account Program created under Section 163.431. The requirements

for homes school children remain the same as current statutory requirements and include proof of 1000 hours of regular instruction (Section 167.012).

The bill defines a "family-paced education school" and specifies that students enrolled in a family-paced education school may participate in both the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Program and the Student Opportunity Savings Account Program. The requirements for family-paced education school children are the same as for home school students with proof of 1000 hours of regular instruction and a daily log requirement (Section 167.013).

This bill modifies current statutes relating to home schools and family-paced education schools for compulsory attendance under Section 167.031, child-care facilities under Section 210.211, and custody issues under Section 452.375.