

HCS HBs 408, 306 & 854 -- SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS (Gragg)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education

SCHOOL SAFETY INCIDENT REPORTS (Section 160.664 RSMo.)

This bill requires local educational agencies to report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) all school safety incidents and credible school safety threats that occur at each attendance center of the local educational agency, including all incidents or credible threats of school shootings or other incidents or threats involving a firearm, explosive, knife, or other weapon, as provided in the bill.

DESE must establish procedures for local educational agencies to follow when reporting a school safety incident or credible threat. These procedures must include, but will not be limited to, criteria to assist local educational agencies in determining what constitutes a school safety incident or credible threat that is required to be reported; a time frame within which such incident or threat must be reported; and any other information required by DESE.

DESE will maintain and regularly update a database of all school safety incidents and credible school safety threats sharing such records with the Department of Public Safety. The records will not contain personally identifying information and the database will only be accessible by the public through a records request under chapter 610.

This provision is similar to HB 1074 (2025).

#### ANTIBULLYING REQUIREMENTS

The bill defines "act of school violence" or "violent behavior" the same as bullying.

The bill requires any school bullying policy to include a statement regarding any student who engages in self-defense must be considered by the school district or charter school administration when determining any disciplinary action for a student who was responding to an act of school violence or violent behavior committed against the student. The bill requires charter schools to adopt and school districts to update current school bullying policies.

Currently, employee's who witness an incident of bullying must report the incident within two days. This bill lowers the

reporting requirement to one day and requires that all reported incidents be submitted in writing. Results of investigations must include a description of any interventions, initiatives, techniques, or discipline provided to all students involved on a standardized form developed by the district.

The policy is required to outline a procedure for responding to an investigation that finds an act of bullying has occurred. The procedure must include notifying the parents and guardians of the bullying student and of the bullied student and a referral to law enforcement or to the Children's Division, for a student that is under 11 years old, if the investigation finds that the bullying was second degree harassment. Additionally, students committing acts of bullying are included in educational trainings and prevention initiatives.

The bill requires the policy to outline annual mandatory training for any district employee and volunteer that has contact with students; training on appropriate interventions and associated liability for action or inaction must be included in the training.

This bill requires the school administration to report monthly to the school board all acts of bullying, discipline for bullying, and all other disciplinary referrals. The school board must review the monthly report in a closed meeting and address concerns related to reported incidents within 30 days.

The bill provides immunity from liability for any school district employee and volunteer who intervenes in an incident involving bullying, school violence, violent behavior, or criminal actions against any student that is a victim of bullying; the bill specifies that the employee or volunteer must follow the proper procedure and act in good faith to intervene under the defense of justification provided under Chapter 563.

The bill provides protection from civil liability for any school district or charter school for disciplinary actions if the procedures were properly followed and if a suit is brought the school can recoup attorney's fees if they prevail.

This bill requires that for reporting requirements for mandated reporters under Section 210.115, bullying, incidents of school violence, and crime, are considered abuse and required to be reported, with protections provided for reporting compliance (Section 160.775).

This is similar to HB 351 (2025)

MISSOURI EDUCATORS AND PARENTAL EMPOWERMENT RIGHTS ACT

This bill establishes the "Missouri Educators and Parental Empowerment and Rights Act", which recognizes the profound effect parents and teachers have on the educational success of Missouri's children and the important role that education plays in our preservation of rights and liberties (Section 160.1052).

The bill also includes the "Parents' Bill of Rights", and the "Educators' Bill of Rights", which outline specific rights for parents of school children including but not limited to, having knowledge of what is being taught; viewing, and upon request, receiving copies of school records; and being informed about the child's safety. Educator rights include, but are not limited to, freedom from student abuse, classroom preparation time during contract hours, and to teach in a safe, secure, and orderly environment (Sections 160.1053 and 160.1054).

The bill requires school districts and charter schools in the State to develop policies and procedures to foster and maintain collaboration between parents and teachers and specify parental rights and educator rights.

Policies include notification to parents of serious disciplinary incidents and procedures for parental visits during school hours. Additionally, the bill provides that policies and procedures be published on the school website and teachers, school administrators, parents, and students be informed of their rights.

The bill outlines a student code of conduct that will set forth expectations for behavior consistent with ethical responsibility, community standards, and respect for school authority. The code of conduct must include high expectations of personal responsibility, encouraging students to uphold values such as honesty, diligence, and civility, include measures to address and correct disruptive behavior, and will clearly prohibit any policy or program that differentiates treatment of students primarily on the basis of race or other immutable characteristics, ensuring that all disciplinary measures are applied equally and fairly to every student.

School counselors and other qualified personnel must offer interventions that empathize respect for self and others, problem solving, and perseverance. School boards and charter schools must adopt board policies by the beginning of the 2026-27 school year, as outlined in the bill.

The bill requires that schools must make efforts to facilitate parental engagement through regular communication, opportunities for parents to review the policy handbook, and the provision of resources that support ethical responsibility and community

standards at home. Schools also must ensure that teachers and staff are trained to maintain order, encourage compliance, foster civility, and encourage personal responsibility (Section 160.1055).

This is the same as HCS for HB 1287

#### ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

The bill will require school districts to adopt a written policy on electronic personal telecommunication devices beginning in the 2026-27 school year. The requirements of the policy are specified and include prohibiting student use of an electronic personal communications device, as defined in the bill, during regularly scheduled instructional activities and meal times unless authorized by the school principal. Exceptions are provided for students with documented needs and for health purposes.

The policy can provide guidelines and requirements for electronic telecommunication devices during emergencies, educational purposes, and non-instructional school activities, including school-sponsored field trips and during transportation.

Districts and charter schools must publish the policy upon demand and the bill specifies liability protections for acting in accordance with the policy. These provisions expire in 2032 (Section 162.207).

#### ZERO-TOLERANCE DISCIPLINE

This bill requires school districts to prohibit any zero-tolerance disciplinary policy. Zero-tolerance discipline that results in an automatic disciplinary consequence without reviewing each pupil in a case by case manner is prohibited (Section 167.167).

This is the same as HB 454.