

HCS HB 607 -- SALARIES FOR TEACHERS (Lewis)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Special Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs

GRADE LEVEL EQUIVALENCE (Section 160.518 and 160.522)

The bill defines "Grade-level equivalence", a metric developed and used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) or a nonprofit 3rd party, to show a student's proximity to doing grade-level work for grades three to eight.

This bill identifies and describes the performance level descriptors as: advanced, proficient, grade level, basic, and below basic, with specified characteristics for each level. The school accountability report card must provide each student's grade-level equivalence as measured on the statewide assessment. Data relating to the grade-level equivalence must be searchable on a building-by-building, school-by-school, district-by-district, and statewide level. The data must display a percentage of students at grade level or above for each level, provided that no data will disclose personal identification of any student except to a student's parent.

ADULT HIGH SCHOOL AGE AND TRANSFER STUDENTS (Sections 160.2700, 160.2705, and 160.2710)

The bill changes the age for enrollment for adult high schools in the state from 21 to 18 years of age. A student who transfers from a local education agency to an adult high school will be considered a transfer student and not a dropout student by the State for the purposes of the compiling and tracking dropout rates.

MISSOURI COURSE ACCESS AND VIRTUAL SCHOOL PROGRAM (Section 161.670 and 163.044)

Currently, school districts with an average daily attendance of 350 or less students qualify for additional funding. This bill removes from the average daily attendance count any nonresident students enrolled in the virtual school program in the school districts.

The bill specifies that any virtual school or program that is part of the Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program may administer any statewide assessment virtually. This bill outlines requirements for virtual assessments, including the monitoring of students via a camera and the maintaining a student-to-proctor ratio that is targeted at 10 to one or lower.

SALARIES FOR TEACHERS' MASTERS DEGREES (Sections 163.045 and 163.172)

This bill clarifies language relating to additional funding for teacher salaries that districts receive if the district has a school calendar with 169 school days. The clarification provided allows for inclement weather or authorized reductions to the number of days the district must be in session to qualify for the funding (Section 163.045 RSMo).

The bill modifies the minimum teacher salary to remove the requirement that a teacher's master's degree must be in an academic teaching field directly related to the teacher's assignment. (Section 163.172).

SCHOOL TUITION AND AID (Section 167.151)

Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, this bill expands who can qualify for a tuition waiver and state aid qualification and allows any child whose parent is a contractor or regular employee of a nonresident school district to attend the school district without paying tuition and to count as a resident pupil for the purpose of state aid.

The bill requires the parent of the nondistrict student to provide specified information and the contractor or employee must have worked a minimum number of days, not to exceed 60, for the student to be eligible. The resident district or the nonresident district is not responsible for providing transportation and if the parent of the student no longer works at the school, the student is allowed to complete the school year.

ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICIES (Section 167.167)

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.

TEACHERS OF TOMORROW (Section 168.021)

The bill authorizes the State Board of Education to issue a Missouri teaching certificate for individuals certified by Teachers of Tomorrow with verification of their ability to work with children with 60 contact hours in the classroom.

TEACHER EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM (Section 168.025)

The bill repeals the sunset provision for the teacher externship program that expired August 28th, 2024.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHING RETIREMENT AUTHORIZATION (Section 168.036)

Currently, the authorization for teachers that are retired to substitute teach without a discontinuance of the teacher's retirement benefit is set to expire in 2025.

This bill extends the authorization until 2030

THREE-CUEING SYSTEM (Section 170.014)

The bill prohibits school districts from using a three-cueing system to teach students to read. A "three-cueing system" is defined as any model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues, also known as "MSV". MSV may be included to improve knowledge, add context, and increase oral language and vocabulary to support comprehension as long as the strategies are not used to teach word reading.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SCHOLARSHIPS (Section 173.232)

This bill modifies the current Teacher Recruitment and Retention State Scholarship Program to allow for scholarships to cover education costs related to teacher preparation in addition to tuition. If the maximum amount of scholarships or appropriated funds are not distributed the Department will use any remaining moneys to award additional scholarships for tuition costs and educational costs related to teacher preparation. The student must: be attending a four-year college or university located in Missouri; in their final semester of a state-approved baccalaureate-level teacher preparation program; and are student teaching.

The Department will determine the amount of each scholarship awarded based on an equal distribution of remaining moneys among all students eligible under this subdivision. No amount granted can exceed the amount of tuition charged to a Missouri resident at the University of Missouri-Columbia for attendance for one semester.

The bill also removes a requirement that school districts pay 25% of the cost for any scholarship recipient that was hired by the district

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION BIDDING (Section 177.086)

Currently, any school district authorizing the construction of facilities which may exceed an expenditure of \$50,000 must publicly advertise for bids on the contract.

The bill exempts school districts which utilize a cooperative procurement process, state procurement services, or other purchasing processes authorized by state or federal law.