

HCS HBs 1287 & 744 -- RIGHTS OF PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

SPONSOR: Lewis

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 18 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1287.

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.

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.

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 enumerate 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 traditional 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 emphasize respect for 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.

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

**PROPONENTS:** Supporters say that the spirit and intent is there to make improvements and work on legislation that recognizes the value of teachers and parents working together with the best interest of a child's education in mind. There are many studies that have surveyed teachers and work climate is a key driver for retention, this bill will provide some assurances to educators that they are valued.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Lewis; Missouri State Teachers Association; and Missouri National Education Association.

**OPPONENTS:** Those who oppose the bill say that the bill is too broad and that a student's right to learn shouldn't be interrupted by misbehavior. This bill will lead to litigation.

Testifying in person against the bill was Roth Mcelvain.

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