

HCS HBs 2230 & 2978 -- INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS IN SCHOOLS (Byrnes)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education

This bill creates the "Student Screen-Time Standards Act" and provides definitions for "instructional technology" and before the end of the 2027-28 school year, requires that school districts and charter schools have a policy on screen time and the use of instructional technology for students in grades Kindergarten through five.

The bill requires that schools limit the use of screen time and the use of instructional technology both during school hours and as assignments or on school devices after the school day. The policy must provide a process for parents to request information about limits on their child's screen time and instructional technology use and districts must use research, evidence, and information to develop the policy based on best practices.

This bill requires parental notification of the policy annually and schools must publish the board policy relating to the use of screen time and instructional technology on the district website.

The bill exempts virtual instruction programs from the requirements of this section.

This bill directs the Literacy Advisory Council under Section 186.080, RSMo, to provide school districts and the State Board of Education advice on the inclusion of instruction and assessment of cursive writing and reading including the development of a model policy on cursive.

The bill directs the Commissioner of Education to establish the "Framework on Classroom Use of Screens Council" or "FOCUS Council" that will consist of 12 to 15 members appointed by the Commissioner. The Council is directed to meet four times a year in the initial year and at least two times annually after that with the purpose of reviewing best practices regarding screen use and the use of technology in instruction and providing related policy provisions. The bill outlines best practices and policies that must be included and directs the council to submit a report containing the Council's actions and policy proposals to the State Board of Education, the Governor, and the Joint Committee on Education on or before July 1, 2027 and updated every two years annually after that.