

HB 111 -- Student Enrollment from Unaccredited School Districts

Sponsor: Solon

This bill changes the laws regarding enrollment options for students from school districts that have been declared unaccredited by the State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by establishing provisions for districts that are not K-8 districts. Current provisions that govern K-8 districts will remain the same but specifies that attendance must be at a public school.

The bill establishes the Education Protection Act which allows a student who is enrolled and attending a public school in a district that has been declared unaccredited when the declaration is made or in a subsequent year, including any student who resides in the unaccredited district and becomes eligible for kindergarten or first grade after the effective date of the bill, to transfer to an accredited district in the same or adjoining county. The tuition paid by the unaccredited district will be the lesser of the nonresident tuition established by each district or, in the absence of an established nonresident tuition, the lesser of the two districts' average expenditure per pupil for the most recently completed year for which data are available. The residence district must pay the cost of education in the receiving district for any transfer student with an individualized education plan. The residence district's responsibility for transportation remains unchanged.

Each school district must develop criteria by June 30, 2013, for the admission of nonresident pupils from unaccredited districts, based primarily upon the availability of highly qualified teachers in existing classroom space. Each district must take demographic projections into account when establishing these policies so that it will not be required to hire additional teachers or build new classrooms to accommodate the transfer pupils. No resident student can be displaced from a school to which he or she would otherwise be assigned to accommodate the admission of a nonresident student. The assignment of a student to a particular building must be the decision of the receiving district.

When the sending district regains its accreditation, the student must return to the residence district at the beginning of the next school year. A student must be free to attend the public school of his or her choice within the limitations of the provisions of the bill and Section 167.020, RSMo, which addresses issues of residency and school safety.

The bill contains an emergency clause.