

CCS HCS SS SCS SB 894 -- EDUCATION

This bill changes the laws regarding education. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Requires school districts, except the St. Louis Special School District, that have a levy lower than the performance levy of \$3.43 to certify to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that they are providing an adequate education. If the district asserts it is not providing an adequate education, the presumption is that insufficient local effort is causing the inadequacy (Section 163.021, RSMo);

(2) Revises the summer school penalty to a three-step phase-out, with the 2006-2007 threshold at 20%, 2007-2008 at 30%, and subsequent years until 2011-2012 at 35%. The penalty will be applied to any drop in summer school enrollment over the threshold level, rather than the entire drop from the base year 2005-2006 level. Small schools, as defined in the bill, are exempt from the penalty, and the penalty should not be construed to lower the amount of a hold-harmless payment. Summer school hours in physical education classes for grades 9 to 12 that do not count for graduation cannot be counted for summer school average daily attendance. The formula adjustment for local effort is revised to reflect decreases in local revenue from the possible creation of a municipal court in St. Charles County on school districts located entirely within that county (Sections 163.011 and 163.031);

(3) Requires districts to adopt anti-bullying policies containing elements specified in the bill. The bill defines "bullying" and prohibits the listing of protected classes of students (Section 160.775);

(4) Requires the department to initiate a ready to work certificate for high school seniors who volunteer to meet standards that indicate they are ready for entry-level employment (Section 1);

(5) Establishes procedures for the City of St. Louis School District to report excessive absences, as defined in the bill, to the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services for parental notification (Section 2); and

(6) Allows the State Board of Education to declare a district unaccredited if the district has been unaccredited within the last five years, achieved provisional accreditation, and goes back to unaccredited status. The lapse of the district will occur on June 30 or at a later date, as specified by the board. This provision becomes effective January 1, 2010 (Section 3).