

HCS SS SCS SB 912 -- VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

SPONSOR: Goodman (Baker, 123)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Student Achievement and Finance by a vote of 8 to 0.

This substitute requires the State Board of Education to establish a virtual public school by July 1, 2007. Any student in kindergarten through grade 12 may enroll, regardless of where the student lives within the state. State school aid will consider the student as part of the enrollment of the district in which the student physically resides if the parent chooses. The virtual public school will report aid-related data to the district of residence. A full-time equivalent student is one who completes six credits per regular term, and each virtual course counts as one class. The school district will retain 15% of the state aid for enrollees under Section 163.031, RSMo, related to the funding formula, and Section 163.043, related to the Classroom Trust Fund, attributable to the student. The virtual public school will receive 85% of the state adequacy target attributable to the student. The virtual public school must comply with all laws applicable to school districts including the state accreditation program, adequate yearly progress, annual performance report, teacher certification, and curriculum standards. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must ensure that multiple providers are available from whom the curriculum may be obtained.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of \$96,466 in FY 2007, \$102,146 to Unknown in FY 2008, and \$104,698 to Unknown in FY 2009. Subject to appropriations. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2007, FY 2008, and FY 2009.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that a virtual school can provide opportunities for students who are hard to serve with a traditional classroom, whether the need is for a specialized teacher in a small district or assistance for a homebound student. The framework allowing the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to serve as both an access point for multiple providers and quality control equal to that of a school district provides flexibility.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Goodman; Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Missouri National Education Association; Missouri State Teachers Association; Missouri School Boards' Association; and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the members of the high school activities association will have to vote to amend its by-laws to allow students in a virtual school to participate.

Others testifying on the bill was Missouri School Administrators Coalition.

Becky DeNeve, Senior Legislative Analyst