

HCS HB 2230 -- CHARTER SCHOOLS

SPONSOR: Hoskins, 80 (Stream)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Urban Issues by a vote of 7 to 0.

This substitute allows the school district in which a failed charter school is located to contract with the governing board of the charter school for the continuing operation of the charter school as a local district school, allows the charter school teachers to continue to be employees of the governing board of the former charter school and requires them to hold the proper certification, and deletes duplicate provisions in Section 160.420, RSMo, which are in Section 160.415.

Any proposed or existing high-risk or alternative charter school may use alternative arrangements for satisfying graduation requirements, such as credit for off-campus instruction, embedded credit, work experience through a school-arranged internship, and independent study. When the State Board of Education approves the school's charter, the alternative arrangements become effective. In order for students to obtain credit, the school's arrangements must be studied by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education after three years of operation to assess student performance, graduation rates, educational outcomes, and entry into the workforce or higher education.

If a charter school's mission includes dropout prevention or recovery, it may enroll a nonresident student who is considered high risk or a dropout who resides in a residential care facility, transitional living group home, or an independent living program and whose last school of enrollment is in the district where the charter school is established. These schools must give preference to resident students over nonresident pupils if enrollment capacity is limited. It may give preference to high-risk students and dropouts in regard to other admission policies.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill establishes a mechanism for the City of St. Louis to set up a charter school that would be known as Shear Water. This charter school will be different than the existing two charter schools because it will focus on job training. This type of charter school is needed because it will help prevent students from dropping out of school. The cost to start up a charter school is far less than the cost of incarcerating students. This charter school model works for this

target population.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Stream, Nasheed, and McNary.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that St. Louis City already has two alternative schools for dropouts that have effective programs and the capacity to expand. Facility and teachers are already available to provide instruction to these students.

Testifying against the bill were AFT Missouri; and Missouri AFL-CIO.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the St. Louis City school board is opposed to the concept of charter schools because they are held to a different educational standard; however, the board remains neutral on the bill.

Testifying on the bill was St. Louis Public Schools.