

HCS HB 1174 -- SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

SPONSOR: Dieckhaus (Lair)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 23 to 0.

This substitute changes the laws regarding school accreditation by authorizing the State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to intervene in and establish alternatives for a failing school district. In its main provisions, the substitute:

- (1) Removes the two-year period between the classification of a district as unaccredited and the time when the district will lapse. The state board will establish conditions under which the existing school district board may continue to govern or determine the date that the district will lapse and an alternative governing structure for the district;
- (2) Changes the timing and the purpose of the hearing that the department must hold in the unaccredited district regarding the accreditation status of the district;
- (3) Specifies the options available to the state board upon the classification of a district as unaccredited including the ability of the state board to determine an alternative governing structure which must include a rationale for the decision and a review and recertification of the alternative form of governance every three years, a method for the residents of the district to provide comment, expectations for progress on academic achievement which includes an anticipated timeframe for the district to reach full accreditation, and annual reporting to the General Assembly and the Governor on an unaccredited district's progress toward accreditation including a review of the effectiveness of the alternative governance;
- (4) Delegates the authority of the board of education of the lapsed district to the special administrative board and deletes provisions relating to the assignment of funds and the transfer of authority from the special administrative board to the district to which a lapsed district may be attached; and
- (5) Repeals the provisions requiring a provisionally accredited and an unaccredited school district to develop a plan to divide the district if it cannot attain accreditation within three years.

The substitute contains an emergency clause.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the two-year period currently required before the State Board of Education can intervene in an unaccredited district was intended to ensure well-designed change, but the process should be speeded up. Removing the waiting period does not endorse or preclude any plans; it provides flexibility to craft an alternative for specific circumstances and strengthens the public engagement process.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lair; Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Bernard DuBray; Norm Ridder; Missouri National Education Association; Missouri School Boards Association; and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.