

This bill changes the laws regarding education.

BRYCE'S LAW (Section 135.1220, RSMo)

The bill establishes Bryce's Law, which requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop a master list of resources available to the parents of children with an autism spectrum disorder and to maintain a web page for the information. The department must actively seek financial resources in the form of grants and donations that may be devoted to scholarship funds or to clinical trials for behavioral interventions that may be undertaken by qualified service providers. The department may contract out or delegate these duties to a nonprofit organization. Priority in referral for funding must be given to children who have not yet entered elementary school. The department director must determine, at least annually, which organizations can be classified as a scholarship-granting organization. A scholarship-granting organization is a charitable organization that is exempt from federal income tax and provides scholarships to eligible students attending qualified public or nonpublic schools of their parents' choice or to children receiving services from qualified providers. Each organization participating in the program must ensure that at least 90% of its revenue from donations is spent on grants to cover all or part of the tuition, fees, and transportation costs; ensure that the scholarships do not exceed an average of \$20,000 per eligible child or \$50,000 per eligible student; demonstrate its financial viability; and provide a surety bond payable to the state in an amount equal to the total amount of contributions expected to be received during the school year if the organization is to receive donations of \$50,000 or more during the school year. An "eligible student" is any elementary or secondary student who attended public school in Missouri the preceding semester or who will be attending school in Missouri for the first time and has an individualized education program (IEP) based on an autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, Angelman syndrome, or cerebral palsy or who has a medical diagnosis by a qualified health professional of one of those conditions. An "eligible child" is a child from birth to age five who has an individualized family services program under the First Steps Program and whose parent or guardian has completed the complaint procedure under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act with an unsatisfactory response or who has been evaluated under the First Steps Program and has been determined to have special needs but falls below the threshold for eligibility by at least 25%. Provisions for determining the number of scholarships based on a percentage of the special needs IEPs and disability incidence rates are included. The scholarship is portable and can be distributed in periodic payments as checks made

out to the student's or child's parent and mailed to the qualified school where the student is enrolled or to the qualified service provider. Each scholarship granting organization must ensure that each participating school or service provider complies with the health and safety and accountability requirements specified in the bill. Each organization must certify that in providing educational services or behavioral strategies to a scholarship recipient with autism spectrum disorder that it will adhere to the best practices recommendations of the Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative or document why it is varying from the guidelines. A scholarship granting organization must publicly report, by June 1 of each year, to the department specified information prepared by a certified public accountant regarding its grants in the previous year. The department must conduct a study with funds other than state funds to determine the level of participating parental and student satisfaction with the program; the percentage of participating students who were bullied or harassed because of their special needs status, the number of students exhibiting behavioral problems, and class size comparisons between the resident school district and the qualified school; and the fiscal impact of the program to the state and resident school districts. The department must present the report to the General Assembly by December 31, 2016.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN (Section 161.249)

The Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children is established with seven members appointed by the Commissioner of Education. Members will serve for a term of four years, except for the initial appointees who will serve specified staggered terms. The commissioner must consider recommendations for membership from organizations of educators and parents of gifted and talented children. Members must be Missouri residents and selected based on their knowledge of or experience in programs and problems of the education of gifted and talented children. The commissioner must seek the advice of the council regarding all rules and policies to be adopted by the State Board of Education relating to the education of gifted and talented children. The board must appoint a staff member to be a liaison to the council and must provide necessary clerical support and assistance to facilitate meetings of the council.

TEACHERS AND SCHOOL EMPLOYEES (Sections 168.021, 169.070, and 169.670)

The bill repeals the August 28, 2014, expiration date for the provisions allowing an individual to obtain a teaching certificate based on certification by the American Board for Certification of

Teacher Excellence.

The expiration date of July 1, 2013, on specified alternative retirement allowance provisions, commonly referred to as "25 and out" are repealed and the bill allows the "31st year factor" of the Public School Retirement System of Missouri and the Public Education Employee Retirement System of Missouri to extend to July 1, 2014.

PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF KANSAS CITY (Sections 169.270, 169.291, 169.324, and 169.350)

The bill changes the laws regarding the Public School Retirement System of Kansas City by:

(1) Specifying that a person will cease to be a member of the retirement system if there is a break in service before becoming vested or if he or she withdraws his or her accumulated contributions from the system. The minimum normal retirement age for any person who becomes a member on or after January 1, 2014, including a previous member who ceased to be a member for any reason other than retirement prior to January 1, 2014, is changed to 62 years of age or the date when the member has at least 80 credits (80 and out), whichever is earlier;

(2) Specifying that beginning in calendar year 2013, the system's actuary must calculate the employer's and member's contribution rate for 2014 and each subsequent year based on the system's actuarial value as of the first day of the prior calendar year and the rate must be certified by the system's board of trustees of the retirement system at least six months prior to its effective date. The actuary must use the actuarial cost method and actuarial assumptions adopted by the board of trustees, as described in the bill, to cover the normal cost and amortization of any unfunded actuarial accrued liability over a period of no more than 30 years. The combined contribution rate will be allocated equally between the employer and member with the contribution rate from each being at least 7.5% but no more than 9%. The contribution rate for each cannot increase or decrease more than .5% from one year to the next. Currently, the employer and member contribution rate is set at 7.5%; and

(3) Specifying that the multiplier for the benefit calculation of an individual who becomes a member on or after January 1, 2014, including an individual who was a member of the retirement system before January 1, 2014, but ceased to be a member for any reason other than retirement, will be 1.75%.

USE OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM (Section 170.340)

A book of a religious nature is allowed to be used as part of instruction in an elective course in literature and history as long as the book is not used in a manner that violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENT PROTECTION ACT (Section 178.550)

The bill establishes the Career and Technical Education Student Protection Act and the Career and Technical Education Advisory Council within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and repeals the provisions regarding the State Advisory Committee for Vocational Education. The advisory council will consist of 11 members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Members will serve a term of five years, except for the initial appointees who will serve specified staggered terms. Members will consist of the following individuals:

- (1) A director or administrator of a career and technical education center;
- (2) An individual from the business community with a background in commerce;
- (3) A representative from Linn State Technical College;
- (4) Three current or retired career and technical education teachers who serve or have served as an advisor to a career and technical education student organization specified in the bill;
- (5) A representative from a business organization, association of businesses, or a business coalition;
- (6) A representative from a community college;
- (7) A representative from Southeast Missouri State University or the University of Central Missouri;
- (8) An individual participating in an apprenticeship recognized by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations or approved by the United States Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship; and
- (9) A school administrator or superintendent of a school offering career and technical education.

A director of guidance and counseling services at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Director of the Division of Workforce Development, and a member of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education will serve as ex-officio members of the advisory

council, and the Assistant Commissioner for the Office of College and Career Readiness of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will provide staff support. The advisory council must meet at least four times annually. Any business coming before the advisory council, including all decisions, votes, exhibits, outcomes, and materials, must be made available on the council's Internet website. The advisory council must make an annual written report regarding the state budget for career and technical education and must annually submit written recommendations regarding the oversight and procedures for the handling of funds for student career and technical education organizations to the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The advisory council must develop a statewide short-range and long-range plan for career and technical education; identify service gaps; confer with public and private entities to promote and improve career and technical education; identify legislative recommendations to improve career and technical education; and promote coordination of existing career and technical education programs.

The provisions of the bill regarding Bryce's Law will expire December 31, 2019.