

HCS SB 67 -- HIGHER EDUCATION

SPONSOR: Dixon (Thomson)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 15 to 0.

This substitute changes the laws regarding higher education.

TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS

References to the predecessor to the Access Missouri Program have been changed to the correct section numbers. Several references to the Commissioner of Education are changed to the Department of Higher Education because the administration of the A+ School Program reimbursements was transferred by executive order to the Department of Higher Education.

TRANSFER OF REAL PROPERTY BY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Currently, the provisions allowing the governing body of specified public higher education institutions to convey or transfer the title to certain real property, except in fee simple, without authorization from the General Assembly expire on August 28, 2017. The substitute repeals the provision regarding the expiration date.

HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

When eligibility for a scholarship or financial aid under the A+ Schools Program; the Higher Education Academic Scholarship Program, commonly known as Bright Flight; or the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program is conditioned upon achievement of a specific level of attainment on a Missouri assessment program instrument, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must provide guidance to school districts for allowing a student to retake the end-of-course assessments, including best practices information for increasing the probability that the student will successfully achieve the required level.

In order for a student who graduates from high school during the 2016-2017 school year or after to be eligible for these scholarships, the student must have achieved a score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I end-of-course assessment and on the official English I end-of-course assessment or the equivalent level on a higher level department-approved assessment unless the student's high school has met all of the department's requirements for waiver for the recipient or the student achieved a qualifying score as established annually by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education within the Department of Higher Education on

the COMPASS exam or ACT or the appropriate component of the ACT test as a high school or postsecondary student. These requirements are not required of a student who is enrolling in a certificate program.

A student who remains continuously enrolled in postsecondary education must successfully complete at least 24 semester credit hours during the first 12-month period of enrollment and 24 semester credit hours each subsequent 12-month period of enrollment to be eligible for financial assistance under the A+ Schools Program and the Bright Flight Program. Beginning with the 2014-15 academic year, a student must successfully complete 24 semester hours each year in order to be eligible for financial assistance under the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program. If an eligible student is unable to successfully complete at least 24 semester credit hours in a 12-month period due to serious and unusual personal circumstances, he or she may seek a waiver by appealing to the designated person or committee at the student's institution. An eligible student who is unable to enroll or ceases attendance because of illness, disability, pregnancy, medical need, service to a nonprofit organization, service to a state or federal government agency, or service in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States may maintain eligibility if specified criteria are met. Verification by a healthcare provider is required in the cases of illness, disability, pregnancy, and medical need.

UNIVERSITY POLICE OFFICERS

The governing board of any state college or university is allowed to enforce campus traffic regulations and the state's general motor vehicle laws through its campus police officers. The governing board is given the authority to establish traffic regulations for its campus. The regulations must be codified, printed, and distributed for public use, and adequate speed limit signs must be posted. Violations will have the same effect as the violation of municipal ordinances. Motor vehicles operated on a campus are subject to the state's general motor vehicle laws. The campus officers must be certified under Chapter 590, RSMo, and have the same powers as other law enforcement officers certified under that chapter.

The provision of the substitute regarding the repeal of the expiration date on the transfer of specified higher education property contains an emergency clause.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill cleans up outdated references in the higher education statutes. The repeal of Missouri Southern State University's statutory mission statement has been removed from the bill, pending more discussion with

stakeholders.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Dixon; and Missouri Southern State University.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.