

HCS HB 1139 -- MANDATORY SCHOOL HOURS

SPONSOR: Cookson

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 14 to 5.

Currently, school districts must schedule a minimum of 174 school days with 1,044 hours. This bill revises the requirement to be a calendar of 1,085 hours of planned attendance, with no requirement as to the number of days. The bill also defines a standard "summer school term" as no less than 144 hours with six weeks of no more than four days per week.

Summer school must not start before the second Monday in June or extend beyond the last day of July, allowing for a July fourth holiday of four days. The regular school term must not open more than seven days before Labor Day or extend beyond the last day of May and must include 42 makeup hours for inclement weather. If a district does not follow the statutory guidelines for setting its opening and closing dates, the department must withhold half of the district's formula funding for each day of violation.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must provide a testing window for statewide assessments that allows the results to be received in time for determining if a student will be required to attend summer school, but no earlier than May 1. School districts must require students who score less than proficient on a statewide assessment to attend summer school; districts must also develop a summer school teacher selection policy that describes objective qualifications for summer school employment.

The bill repeals some restrictions on the length of the school day and repeals the provisions that prescribe how a district may undertake a four-day school week.

The bill becomes effective July 1, 2015.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that tourism suffers when the school year lingers into June or starts in August.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cookson; Ross Summers; Larry Helms, Missouri Association of RV Parks; Michelle Lambeth; Franc Flotron; Mike Brown; Jerry Hobbs, Cole County R-I School District; Missouri Chamber of Commerce; Tri-County Lodging Association; Cheryl Wilkerson; Doyle Isom, Blue Springs Ranch; Stephen Bass; Missouri Canoe and Floaters Association; and Branson Chamber of Commerce.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that students need extra time and districts should be able to control their own calendar.

Testifying against the bill were AFT Missouri; Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City; Missouri State Teachers Association; Missouri National Education Association; Missouri School Boards Association; Missouri School Administrators Coalition; and Missouri Farm Bureau.