

HB 565 -- MISSOURI COURSE ACCESS PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Spencer

This bill establishes the Missouri Course Access Program. In its main provisions, the bill:

- (1) Specifies that the purpose of the program is to allow public school students to enroll in on-line, blended, and face-to-face courses to supplement coursework offered at the school where the student is enrolled;
- (2) Specifies that the program is separate and distinct from the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program, established in Section 161.670, RSMo;
- (3) Permits any eligible participating student to enroll in state course access program courses;
- (4) Permits an eligible funded student to enroll in the program courses that are funded by the program up to certain, specified levels, unless additional courses are approved by the school where they are enrolled;
- (5) Permits the families of eligible funded students and other eligible participating students to pay to enroll in state course access program courses above the levels specified in these provisions;
- (6) Permits the local education agency where eligible funded students are enrolled full time to review enrollment requests to ensure courses are academically appropriate, logistically feasible, keep the student on track for an on-time graduation, and do not extend a student beyond a full-time course load. The local education agency may only reject enrollment requests for those reasons;
- (7) Requires local education agencies to inform students and families of their right to appeal any enrollment denials in state course access program courses to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which must provide a final enrollment decision within seven calendar days;
- (8) Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish an authorization process for course providers that includes multiple opportunities for submission each year;
- (9) Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to authorize course providers no later than 90 calendar days from

the initial submission date, if course providers:

- (a) Meet the criteria established under these provisions; and
- (b) Provide courses which offer the instructional rigor and scope required under these provisions;
- (10) Requires the department to provide a written explanation to any course providers that are denied no later than 90 calendar days from the initial submission date;
- (11) Permits course providers to reapply after an authorization denial;
- (12) Requires the department to publish the process established under these provisions, including any deadlines and any guidelines applicable to the submission and authorization process for providers;
- (13) Permits the department to charge applicant providers a fee up to but no greater than the amount of the costs in order to ensure that evaluation occurs if the department determines that there are insufficient funds available for evaluating and authorizing course providers;
- (14) Requires the department to establish and publish a fee schedule for purposes of these provisions;
- (15) Specifies what actions providers must take to be authorized to offer a course through the program;
- (16) Requires the department to develop additional criteria to evaluate providers and permits the department to include International Association for K-12 Online Learning (INACOL) National Standards for Quality Online Teaching and INACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), AdvancED, or other nationally recognized third-party quality standards;
- (17) Requires the department to establish a course review and approval process which may be implemented by the department or by an entity designated by the department;
- (18) Provides requirements for courses to be approved and added to the Missouri Course Access catalog;
- (19) Permits the department to negotiate changes in the proposal to offer a course, if the department determines that changes are necessary in order to authorize the course;

(20) Specifies authorization, review, probation, exclusion and reauthorization processes for course providers;

(21) Permits the department to enter into a reciprocity agreement with other states for the purpose of authorizing and approving high quality providers and courses for the state course access program and the operation of the state course access catalog;

(22) Specifies requirements for the department including publishing criteria, creating the catalog, publishing a link to the catalog on the department website, establishing a time frame including withdrawal dates, maintaining an informed choice report on the website, and what must be included in the report;

(23) Requires the department to submit an annual report on the State Course Access Program and the participation of entities to the Governor, and the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Joint Committee on Education and specifies what must be included in the report and how it must be published;

(24) Requires school districts and charter schools to notify students and parents as part of any course enrollment period or process of the availability of state course access program courses in correspondence that is written in simple and accurate language, provide information by letter or email to students and parents at home and by at least two other means, and publish information and eligibility guidelines on the school and school district's websites;

(25) Requires each local school system to establish policies and procedures for each eligible participating student as identified these provisions, with specified conditions;

(26) Requires the performance data of students who are enrolled in a course under these provisions to be counted in the school performance score for the school in which the student is enrolled full time;

(27) Authorizes the department to adopt rules necessary to implement these provisions;

(28) Provides the determinations for per-course tuition under the program;

(29) Bases payment of tuition to course providers upon student success and provides a tuition ratio;

The program described in these provisions will expire six years

from the effective date.