

HCS HB 1368 -- SCHOOLS FOR THE SEVERELY DISABLED

SPONSOR: Hubrecht

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Education by a vote of 7 to 0.

This bill establishes a "Committee on Schools for the Severely Disabled" in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, composed of the following members:

(1) One member who is an employee of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, appointed by the Commissioner of Education;

(2) One member from the House of Representatives, who is of the majority party, appointed by the Speaker;

(3) One member from the Senate, who is of the minority party, appointed by the President Pro Tem;

(4) One member from the Joint Committee on Education, appointed by the Committee Chair; and

(5) Three members who are on the staff of the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled appointed by the Commissioner of Education.

The bill requires the Committee on Schools for the Severely Disabled to examine the regulations under which the schools for the severely disabled are established, recommend any changes to the regulations that would allow the schools to better serve students, examine federal regulations that affect the operations of the schools, and recommend any changes to the federal regulations.

The committee must meet at least one time within three months of the bill's effective date and must report its findings to the Joint Committee on Education prior to February 1, 2018.

Before January 1, 2019, the committee must report its findings and recommendations, including its recommended changes to federal regulations, to the Missouri Congressional Delegation.

These provisions will expire on January 1, 2019.

This bill is similar to HB 1262 (2015).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say this bill will form a committee to look

at schools for the severely disabled and make recommendations. The committee needs to focus on two issues: low teacher salaries and doing something to fully fund these schools that currently are not fully funded. It is important that the legislature continue to support state schools.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hubrecht and the Missouri Education Reform Council.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council has 23 members meant to develop and review information on policies that affect those with developmental disabilities, defined as disabilities developing or occurring before the age of 21. Research has shown that both social skill improvement and academic achievement have been increased relative to when someone is in a more restrictive environment compared to when they are in a more integrated environment. Four out of five studies show that there is no detrimental effect for students in regular education who are in classrooms with students receiving special education. Research also shows there is a correlation with the level of education someone experiences and their being able to then go on and become employed and competitive later in life.

Testifying on the bill was Andrew Lackey, Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council.