

HCS HB 2247 -- CHARTER SCHOOLS

SPONSOR: Roeber

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 7 to 6. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Administrative Oversight Committee by a vote of 9 to 3.

This bill changes the law regarding charter schools.

The bill removes provisions authorizing a charter school to operate in a school district that has been classified as provisionally accredited. Instead, a charter school may operate in any school district in which at least one attendance center has received an annual performance report ("APR") score of 60% or less for two of the three most recent reports available when the charter school applies to open a school. A charter school opening in such a district shall offer grade levels consistent with the grade levels offered by the attendance center which received the APR scores that allowed the charter school to open. A charter school opened under this provision shall give a preference for admission of pupils who reside in the attendance area of the attendance center which received the APR scores that allowed the charter school to open. The charter school may continue to operate regardless of any improvement in the annual performance report scores in the district (Section 160.400, RSMo).

This bill establishes a performance standard under which a charter school is underperforming if the percentage of the charter school's students who perform proficient and advanced on the annual statewide system of assessments in English language arts and mathematics is lower than the average percentage of grade-level-equivalent students in nonselective attendance centers in the school district in which the charter school is located who perform proficient and advanced in English language arts and mathematics. However, a charter school is not underperforming if the average rate of growth in English language arts and mathematics on the annual statewide system of assessments based on Missouri's growth model for the charter school's students is higher than the average rate of growth for grade-level-equivalent students in nonselective attendance centers in the school district in which the charter school is located. Further, a charter school is not underperforming if 50% of the school's students were previously considered dropouts as specified in the bill (Section 160.404).

If a charter school underperforms for at least two years the charter school's sponsor shall revoke the charter or take other remedial action, which may include a probationary period (Section

160.405).

A sponsor's renewal process for a charter school shall consider whether the school met the performance standard in two of the three consecutive years immediately before the renewal decision is made. If the charter school did not meet the standard in that period, any renewal granted shall be for only a three-year term. If the school again fails to meet the standard for two years of the three-year term, the school's charter shall not be renewed (Section 160.405).

Any sponsor of a charter school that failed to receive renewal of its charter after the three-year term shall not sponsor any new charter schools until the State Board of Education has determined that the sponsor was in compliance with all laws regarding charter schools for any charter school it sponsored at the time a charter school failed to receive such renewal (Section 160.400).

The bill also requires all members of the governing board of a charter school to be Missouri income or property taxpayers, except that members serving as of August 28, 2018 may serve the remainder of their terms regardless of that requirement (Section 160.400).

The bill also changes the law regarding how state aid and tuition are determined, as specified in the bill (Section 160.415).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that on average charter schools perform better than other public schools, and due to competition also increase the performance of nearby public schools. This bill allows expansion of charter schools into districts that are underperforming, and provides for automatic closure of charter schools that are underperforming. Higher competition and accountability benefit students.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Roeber; Douglas Thaman, Missouri Charter Public School Commission; Sam Duell, Foundation for Excellence in Education; Ryan Tucker; Susan Pendergrass, Show-Me Institute; Emerson; Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Missouri Education Reform Council; American Federation for Children; and Korey Beerbaaur.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that charter schools opening in a district, without any overall strategic planning for the total number of schools in the district, dilute the funding available for schools. Further, because the bill allows charter schools to enroll students regardless of residence in the district where the charter school is located, charter schools may recruit students from high-performing public schools, depleting those schools' resources as well.

Testifying against the bill were Charles Pearson, Normandy Schools Collaborative; Dan Clemens, North Kansas City Schools; Susan Goldammer, Missouri School Boards' Association; Missouri National Education Association; Missouri State Teachers Association; Missouri Administrators Coalition; American Federation of Teachers of Missouri; and Gerald (Jerry) Miller.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the presence of nearby charter schools did not improve public school quality; instead, Missouri's process for takeover of a failing school improved public school quality.

Testifying on the bill was St. Louis Public Schools.