

CCS HCS SCS SBs 807 & 577 -- HIGHER EDUCATION

This bill removes public institutions of higher education from Chapter 34 purchasing regulations (Section 34.010, RSMo).

The bill also modifies the A+ program. Students will be eligible if they have attended a high school in Missouri for three years and graduated. The bill eliminates the requirement that the three-years attendance has occurred immediately prior to graduation (Section 160.545).

This bill adds an additional mechanism by which the taxing district of a public school may attach itself to a community college district in order to increase the tax base of the community college district and secure in-district tuition rates for students of the school district. The new mechanism allows the community college to propose the plan to the school district's voters and pay for the election (Section 162.441).

The bill allows the Coordinating Board for Higher Education to approve new degree programs offered by state institutions of higher education. Community colleges may be authorized to offer baccalaureate degrees to meet local workforce needs, and other universities may collaborate with the University of Missouri to offer degrees in engineering, chiropractic, osteopathic medicine, and podiatry. The University of Missouri remains the state's only public research university and the only institution authorized to grant research doctorates and first-professional degrees including dentistry, law, medicine, optometry, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine (Sections 163.191, 172.280, 173.005, 174.160, 174.225, 174.231, 174.251, 174.500, and 178.636).

This bill requires students entering public institutions of higher education for the first time after July 2019 to score at least 70% on the Missouri Higher Education Civics Achievement Examination as a condition of graduation. The exam shall consist of 50 to 100 questions similar to the questions in the United States citizenship examination (Section 170.013).

The bill adds several professions, including air ambulance pilots, air ambulance registered professional nurses, air ambulance registered respiratory therapists, uniformed employees of the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and emergency medical technicians, and their children and spouses, to the list of those eligible to receive a public safety officer or employee survivor grant from the Coordinating Board for Higher Education within the Department of Higher Education (Section 173.260).

This bill changes the cap on tuition increases at public

institutions of higher education. Currently, tuition increases are capped at the rate of inflation. This bill allows institutions to increase their tuition by inflation plus a percentage, capped at 5%, that would produce an increase in net tuition revenue no greater than the amount by which the state operating support was reduced in the previous fiscal year (Section 173.1003).

The bill adds approved virtual institutions to the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program (Sections 173.1101, 173.1102, 173.1104, 173.1005, and 173.1107).

This bill also establishes the "College Credit Disclosure Act," which requires a higher education institution that grants college-level credit but is not accredited by a federally recognized regional accreditor to disclose during the admission application process that the institution is not accredited. The institution must provide the disclosure in writing to an enrolling student before the student registers for any class that grants credit, and the student must sign the disclosure. The bill specifies the language of the required disclosure. The bill exempts any institution that is affiliated with a religious organization if the institution is accredited by a federally recognized faith-related accreditor (Section 173.1450).

Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, the bill requires every public institution of higher education to publish a report measuring both the institution's ability to adequately meet student mental health needs, and compliance with the standards promulgated by the International Association of Counseling Services relating to mental health services on college campuses (Section 173.2530).