

HCS SS SCS SBs 894 & 921 -- STEM EDUCATION

This bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to establish a "STEM Career Awareness Program" for middle school students (Section 161.261, RSMo).

The bill also requires DESE to develop a high school graduation policy that will allow a student to substitute a computer science course for any math, science, or practical arts unit required for high school graduation. DESE will convene a work group including representatives from elementary and secondary education, institutions of higher education, business, and industry. This work group will develop rigorous academic performance standards for the computer science courses. DESE shall develop a procedure for teachers to receive an endorsement on their teaching license if they demonstrate sufficient knowledge of computer science (Section 170.018).

The bill also requires DESE to handle career and technical student organization funds (Section 161.106).

The bill authorizes schools to rely on technical coursework and skills assessments developed for industry-recognized certificates and credentials when developing career and technical education pathways for their students (Section 162.1115).

The bill establishes the "Career Readiness Course Task Force" to study the possibility of offering a middle school career readiness course (Section 167.910).

The bill also requires the Career and Technical Education Advisory Council to annually recommend a list of industry certifications, state-issued professional licenses, and occupational competency assessments. A school district may use the list as a resource in establishing programs of study that meet their regional workforce needs (Section 170.028).

The bill provides that Missouri taxpayers who hire a STEM student attending a Missouri college for an internship in Missouri, or a STEM graduate from a Missouri college for a full-time STEM position in Missouri, may apply to have \$10,000 of state tax liability placed in the Missouri Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Fund, subject to appropriation by the General Assembly and approval by the Department of Higher Education. The cumulative amount of taxes transferred to the fund is capped at an annual total of \$200,000 (Section 173.670).

The bill also modifies the composition of the Career and Technical Education Advisory Council by adding the Director of the Department

of Economic Development or his or her designee (Section 178.550).