

HCS HB 456 -- STEM DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENT

SPONSOR: Neely

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Special Committee on Student Accountability by a vote of 7 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 5 to 3.

This bill creates a STEM diploma endorsement for high school students who demonstrate mastery in the STEM disciplines.

The bill defines a "granting local education provider" as a school district or charter school that chooses to grant a STEM diploma endorsement to a student who demonstrates mastery in the STEM disciplines and adds the STEM definition to Section 170.032, RSMo.

The bill establishes a work group to be composed of 10 members as appointed by the Governor and outlined in the bill. The work group will recommend coursework standards for a STEM endorsement and annually, each granting local education provider shall provide the endorsement requirements to each student and parent or guardian.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill will help encourage students to consider STEM fields of study, and that bringing focus to STEM is important as it brings job skills to areas of need. Supporters also support students that may not be college bound to have opportunity to get endorsements like the bill would provide.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Neely; Missouri Association of School Administrators; Missouri NEA; Associated Industries of Missouri; Microsoft Corporation; and Code.Org.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that while the bill supports STEM education there does not appear to be input from employers in the state on the needs or the level of STEM achievement needed to succeed. Opponents point to the standards outlined in the bill as to high of a bar that might actually discourage students from STEM diploma certification.

Testifying against the bill were Aligned and JG Circle of Hope.