

HCS HB 541 -- LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

SPONSOR: Lewis (6)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 13 to 6. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 541.

This bill will require, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, by November 1 of each year, to publish on the Department's website a list of schools in the state that have been performing within the bottom 5% of schools for more than three years, and shall designate any such school as a "persistently failing school".

Any school district with more than two schools falling into the bottom 5% of schools for more than two years shall be classified as provisionally accredited by the State Board of Education.

School districts with any school falling in the bottom 5% of schools for three years over a five year period beginning in 2018, shall:

- (1) Close the school and transfer students attending such school to a higher performing school in the district;
- (2) Develop a partnership with a nonprofit school operator to create an in-district charter school; or
- (3) Reimburse any district or charter school, that will allow students to transfer, an amount equal to the average per-pupil expenditure for the district.
- (4) Participate in a School Turnaround Program established in 161.1080 RSMo.

Any school district that has more than 20% of students attending persistently failing schools shall work with an external partner to develop a district plan to reduce the number of students in such schools by 5% each year or to increase performance on the state assessment by 5%, and shall establish a charter authorizing office, or partner with an eligible public four-year college or university to review any charter petitions for the district, approve such charter petitions, and submit such petitions to the Board of Education for a vote.

This bill is similar to SB 133 (2021) and SB 1021 (2020).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill is necessary to address low performing schools and that showing growth is an important step. This bill requires action to be taken for certain districts with ongoing poor performance.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lewis and Eric Scroggins, The Opportunity Trust.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this could lead districts to consolidate and may have an adverse effect that will force schools to close and may not help districts overall.

Testifying against the bill were Arnie C. Dienoff; Betty Vassmer, Cowgill R-VI; Brian Henry, Waynesville R-VI School District; Della Bell-Freeman; Desi Kirchhofer, Northwest School District; Missouri NEA; Vicki Hanson, Fox C-6 School Board; Yolanda Cargile, Center School District; Allen Moss, Houston R-1 School District; Chris M Berger, Wright City R-II; Jane Raimondo; John Raimondo; Shane Williamson; Madeline Raimondo; American Federation of Teachers; Missouri School Boards Association and the Missouri Association of School Administrators.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.