

SS SCS HCS HB 1552 -- ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

This bill modifies provisions relating to alternative education programs.

FUNDING FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS (Section 160.415, RSMo.)

The bill specifies that in addition to any state aid remitted to charter schools, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) shall remit to any charter school an amount equal to the weighted average daily attendance (WADA) of the charter school multiplied by the difference of:

- (1) The amount of state and local aid per WADA received by the school district in which the charter school is located, not including any funds remitted to the charter school in the district; and
- (2) The amount of state and local aid per WADA of the charter school received by the charter school.

When calculating the amount of funding DESE shall utilize the most current data available. This funding calculation applies to charter schools operating in specified school districts.

The bill requires the members of a governing board of a charter school to be a resident of the state and any charter school management company operating a charter school in the state shall be incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under provisions of law relating to nonprofit corporations.

Beginning July 1, 2023, provisions of law relating to lactation accommodations for employees, teachers, and students shall be applicable to charter schools.

This bill requires charter schools to publish their annual performance report on the school's website in a downloadable format.

CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMISSION (Section 160.425)

This bill creates the "Charter Public School Commission Revolving Fund" in the State Treasury and specifies that sponsorship funding due to the Charter Public School Commission from DESE in the Commission's role as a charter school sponsor shall be deposited into the Fund.

VIRTUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (Section 161.670)

This bill modifies provisions relating to the Virtual School Program and specifies that the Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program shall offer nonclassroom-based instruction in a virtual setting.

The bill requires that student attendance in a virtual program shall only be included in any district pupil attendance calculation or charter school pupil attendance calculation for the calculation and distribution of state school aid using current year pupil attendance for full-time virtual program pupils. Currently, the definition of a "full-time equivalent student" is a student who had successfully completed the instructional equivalent of six credits per regular term, this bill changes the definition to a student who is currently enrolled in the instructional equivalent of six credits per regular term. Pursuant to an education services plan and collaborative agreement, full-time equivalent students may be allowed to use a physical location of the resident school district for all or some portion of ongoing instructional activity and the enrollment plan shall provide for the reimbursement of costs for providing such access.

The bill specifies that a full-time virtual school program serving full-time equivalent students shall participate in the statewide assessment system, with the results to be assigned to the designated attendance center of the full-time virtual school program. The academic performance of any student who disenrolls from a full-time virtual school program and enrolls in a public school or charter school shall not be used in determining the annual performance report score of the attendance center or school district in which the student enrolls for 12 months from the date of enrollment.

A public institution of higher education operating a full-time virtual school program shall be subject to all requirements applicable to a host school district with respect to its full-time equivalent students.

Currently, a school district or charter school must allow any eligible student who resides in the district to enroll in Missouri course access and virtual school program courses as part of the student's annual course load each school year. This bill modifies the requirement to allow any student who resides in this state to enroll in these courses with the costs of the course or courses to be paid by the school district or charter school as long as the student is enrolled full-time in a public or charter school and received approval from the student school district or charter school prior to enrolling.

Currently, school counselors are not required to approve or

disapprove a student's enrollment in the virtual school program. This bill repeals that provision and specifies that the policy shall ensure that available opportunities for in-person instruction are considered prior to moving a student to virtual courses and allow for continuous enrollment throughout the school year.

The bill changes the process for denying a student enrollment in the virtual school program and specifies that good cause justification to disapprove a student's request for enrollment shall be consistent with the determination that would be made for such course request under the process by which a district student would enroll in a similar course offered by a school district or charter school. The appeal process for course denials shall be similar to the process by which appeals are considered for students seeking to enroll in courses offered by a school district or charter school.

This bill requires DESE to adopt a policy for students enrolling in a full-time virtual program, with the policy containing information specified in the bill. Each host district shall implement the state policy.

Virtual school programs shall monitor individual student success and engagement and provide regular progress reports for each student at least four times per school year to the school district or charter school. The bill repeals a provision requiring school districts and charter schools to monitor student progress and success.

DESE shall monitor the aggregate performance of virtual providers. An education services plan may require an eligible student to have access to student facilities of the resident school district during regular school hours. The plan shall provide for reimbursement of the resident school district for such access.

The bill creates a definition for "instructional activities" and states that a full-time virtual school shall develop a policy setting forth consequences for a student who fails to complete the required instructional activities. If a full-time virtual school disenrolls a student for failure to complete required instructional activities, the school shall immediately provide written notification to such student's school district of residence.

A student shall be enrolled in a new educational option as specified in the bill.

Virtual school programs shall comply with audit requirements under state law, access to public records under state law, and school accountability report cards under state law. Teachers and

administrators employed by a virtual provider shall be considered to be employed in a public school for all certification purposes under state law.

On or before January 1, 2023, DESE shall create a guidance document that details options for virtual course access and full-time virtual course access for all students in the state. The document shall be distributed as specified in the bill.