

HCS HB 1041 -- SCHOOL PERSONNEL (Cunningham, 86)

This substitute requires successor school districts to ensure access to continuation of health care for retired teachers and employees of a district that lapses, is merged or divided, or otherwise loses its corporate structure, if the original district provided health care benefits at the time of its dissolution. The proration factor is removed from the career ladder entitlement line in the school funding formula; this portion of the substitute contains an emergency clause. The substitute permits districts to offer hiring incentives and salary schedule modifications under certain circumstances to both tenured and probationary teachers. Districts meeting certain financial criteria that place contracted teachers on leave more than 40 days after the appropriations bill is signed must pay the teachers the greater of the salary for days worked or \$3,000. Districts will not be reimbursed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for more than one A+ program coordinator. School district officials, like officials of other political subdivisions, are currently limited to \$1,500 per annum in the amount they can accept for performing services for their district; the substitute raises the amount for school boards to \$5,000. The substitute prohibits public school personnel from performing strip searches on students and from requiring students to remove religious emblems or garments if they are worn in a nondisruptive manner. The annual re-examination of school bus drivers over the age of 70 remains the same, but the background check, now annual, will occur every three years.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of \$3,947,351 in FY 2005, FY 2006, and FY 2007. Estimated Cost on Other State Funds of \$10,000 in FY 2005, \$0 in FY 2006, and \$0 in FY 2007.