

HCS HB 388 -- Parent and Community School Information Act

SPONSOR: Swan

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 19 to 5.

This substitute establishes the Parent and Community School Information Act and requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to publish a simplified letter-grade report card for each public school attendance center and each charter school, except for a school that has only kindergarten through second grade. This report card is separate from and in addition to the annual report required by Section 160.522, RSMo. Each school building is graded on the number of points it achieved on its annual performance report under the school improvement program divided by the number of points possible. The grading scale is based on deciles, allowing for plus and minus grades, with below 60% being an F.

The report is for informational purposes and is separate from the school improvement program. The first report card must be distributed before December 1, 2014. Each school must notify parents and the community about the report's contents and provide directions for accessing information. The department must make annual progress reports to the Joint Committee on Education on the establishment of the report card and on simplifying access to its data portal and provide a link from its homepage to the reports. The principal of an attendance center or charter school may provide a short statement giving background information for a better understanding of the letter grade.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that parents and communities need easily understandable information about their local schools. Sometimes, the sheer amount of information and the difficulty of finding it keep parents from being as informed as they would like to be.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Swan; Children's Education Council of Missouri; Tiffarnish Lewis; Michelle Coen-Racanelli; Students First; Missouri Education Reform Council; and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

OPPOSERS: Opponents say that there is already a building-level report card. An oversimplified report may not be fair. Emphasis on a letter grade may stifle risk-taking in improvement.

Testifying against the bill were Mike Lodewegen, Missouri School Administrators Coalition; St. Louis Public Schools; Missouri School

Boards Association; Missouri National Education Association; Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City; American Federation of Teachers; Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis; and Missouri State Teachers Association.

Others testifying on the bill say that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is working on its data portal design.

Testifying on the bill was Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.