

HB 42 -- SCHOOL ACCREDITATION AND TRANSFERS

SPONSOR: Wood

This bill establishes a system of school accreditation by building rather than by district.

The bill defines an "attendance center" as a public school building, buildings, or part of a school building that constitutes one unit for accountability purposes under the Missouri School Improvement Program. The State Board of Education may consider the classification designation of an attendance center in its accreditation classification system to exempt attendance centers with classification numbers outside the range of numbers assigned to a high school, middle school, or elementary school. Within a special school district, a public separate special education school and juvenile detention center are exempt from these provisions. A special school district must continue to report all annual performance report scores to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, but these schools will not be for accreditation purposes. This section will become effective 30 days after publication in state regulations and will not be subject to the two-year delay contained in Section 161.092(9), RSMo.

Currently, the school board of a school district that does not maintain an accredited school is required to pay the tuition and transportation of resident pupils who attend an accredited school in another district of the same or an adjoining county. This provision currently applies to both unaccredited school districts and K-8 school districts that do not offer high school grades. The bill repeals the provisions applicable to unaccredited school districts.

The bill provides that the Board of Education of each unaccredited district in Missouri must pay tuition for each resident who is assigned to an unaccredited school in the district and meets the criteria of these provisions.

Beginning in the school year 2015-16 tuition will be calculated as follows:

(1) Multiply the full-time equivalent membership, as defined in Section 163.011, of the transfer students to any receiving district by the amount of the state adequacy target used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in calculating the current year formula apportionments under Section 163.031;

(2) Multiply the amount derived in subdivision (1) of this subsection by the dollar value modifier of the receiving district

used in calculating the current year formula apportionment;

(3) Multiply the amount derived in subdivision (2) of this subsection by the percentage formula adjustment, if any, used by the department in calculating the current year formula apportionment; and

(4) Add to the amount derived in subdivision (3) of this subsection the payment amount based on full-time equivalent membership used in the prior year for distribution of the funds from the school district trust fund under Section 163.087 multiplied by the full-time equivalent membership of the transfer students attending the receiving district.

If there is disagreement as to the amount of tuition to be paid, the facts must be submitted to the Missouri Board of Education, and its decision in the matter is final. Subject to the limitations specified in the bill, each student must be free to attend the public school of his or her choice.

A student who is assigned to an unaccredited building in an unaccredited district may transfer to a public school in another district of the same or an adjoining county if the receiving district is accredited without provisions by the State Board of Education and the student follows the procedures specified in the bill. Before a student who attends a public school in an unaccredited district may transfer to an accredited district in the same or an adjoining county, the unaccredited district must determine if there is sufficient capacity in a district school offering the student's grade level of enrollment that is classified as accredited by the state board of education at the individual building level. If the capacity exists, the student must remain enrolled in the unaccredited district and attend the accredited school, provided that the student meets any admissions requirements criteria if the school is a magnet school, academically selective school, or school with a competitive entrance process.

The parent or guardian of a student who seeks to transfer to an accredited district in the same or an adjoining county must provide proof that the student has resided in the unaccredited district for at least 12 months prior to seeking to transfer out of the district. Any student who transfers to an accredited district must maintain residency in his or her unaccredited district of residence to continue eligibility for enrollment in the accredited district. If a student does not maintain residency, the student must no longer be eligible to attend the accredited district. If a transfer student voluntarily withdraws from the accredited district in which he or she has enrolled, the student must be permanently ineligible to re-enroll in the accredited district and the student

must be ineligible to transfer to another district.

By August 1, 2015, each local school board must establish specific criteria through board policy for the admission of a nonresident pupil from a district that have been classified as unaccredited by the State Board of Education who seeks admission into a school district as specified in the bill. Each school board must adopt and publish a policy for reasonable student and teacher ratios and reasonable class sizes. When adopting its policy, each school board must consider previous years student enrollment, student and teacher ratios, and class size. Each school board must take into account the district's resident student population growth or decrease, based on demographic projections provided by the Office of Socioeconomic Data Analysis. The receiving district must not be required to employ additional teachers or construct new classrooms to accommodate the transfer student. A resident student may not be displaced from a school that he or she is assigned to accommodate the admission of a nonresident student. The assignment of a student to a particular building must be the decision of the receiving district.

If an unaccredited district becomes classified as provisionally accredited or accredited without provisions by the State Board of Education, any resident student of the unaccredited district who is enrolled in an accredited district in the same or an adjoining county must be permitted to continue in the accredited district through the highest grade level offered at the school building he or she is currently attending; however, the student must be required to return to his or her resident district at the time he or she would normally matriculate to a building offering higher grade levels.

The bill contains an emergency clause.