

HCS HB 550 -- CHARTER SCHOOLS

SPONSOR: Wood

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Education by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill changes the laws regarding charter schools. In its main provisions, the bill:

- (1) Adds to the provisions relating to contracts between charter schools and their sponsors the requirement that performance consequences must be aligned with annual performance report evaluations of public schools (Section 160.400.11, RSMo);
- (2) Adds to the requirement that charter school sponsors develop policies and procedures for a performance contract to require charter schools to meet current state academic performance standards as well as other standards agreed upon by the sponsor and the charter school in the contract (Section 160.400.16);
- (3) Specifies that when a sponsor notifies a charter school of closure, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must withhold funds to assure all obligations of the charter school are met. The state, charter sponsor, or resident must not be liable for any outstanding liability or obligations of the charter school (Section 160.400.18);
- (4) Exempts the Missouri Charter Public School Commission from the application and approval process to be eligible to sponsor a charter school (Section 160.403.1);
- (5) Repeals the provision prohibiting an eligible sponsor that is not currently sponsoring a charter school as of August 28, 2012, from commencing charter sponsorship without approval from and a sponsor contract with the State Board of Education within the department (Section 160.403.4);
- (6) Requires the state board to approve a charter by January 31 prior to the school year of the proposed opening date of the charter school. Currently, the state board must approve a charter by December 1 of the year prior to the proposed opening date of the charter school (Section 160.405.2);
- (7) Requires the sponsor to prepare the statement of finding that the application meets statutory requirements which is currently required when a sponsor approves a charter and submits the

application to the state board (Section 160.405.3);

(8) Requires the state board to approve or deny a charter application within 60 days of its receipt. Any charter application received on or before November 15 of the year prior to the proposed opening of the charter school must be considered by the state board within 60 days. At the end of 60 days, the charter application will be deemed approved unless the state board disapproves it on the grounds that it fails to meet statutory requirements or the sponsor has previously failed to meet the statutory responsibilities of a sponsor. If the state board disapproves a charter application, it must do so in writing and identify the specific failures of the application to meet statutory requirements. The written disapproval must be provided to the sponsor within 10 business days (Section 160.405.3);

(9) Specifies that a charter school with an annual performance report consistent with a classification of accredited for three of the last four years and is fiscally viable may have an expedited renewal process (Section 160.405.9);

(10) Requires the department to calculate an annual performance report for each charter school and publish it in the same manner as they are calculated and published for districts and attendance centers (Section 160.405.15);

(11) Requires the department to create a committee, comprised of equal members of the charter school sector and the public school sector, to investigate facility access and affordability for charter schools and to report the findings to the General Assembly by December 31, 2015 (Section 160.405.16);

(12) Allows high quality charter schools, as defined in the bill, to be provided expedited opportunities to replicate and expand, subject to specified conditions, into unaccredited districts, the St. Louis City School District, or the Kansas City School District (Section 160.408);

(13) Requires a charter school to enroll nonresident pupils from the same or an adjoining county who were enrolled in and attended an unaccredited district for at least one semester and who were unable to transfer to an accredited school within their district of residence (Section 160.410.1);

(14) Prohibits the lottery system in determining the enrollment of pupils when a school's capacity is insufficient from discriminating based on parents' ability to pay fees or tuition (Section 160.410.2);

(15) Specifies that students who have been enrolled in a charter school for a full academic year must be counted in the performance of that school on the statewide assessments of that year. Currently, students who are present for the January membership are counted in the performance. "Full academic year" means the last Wednesday in September through the administration of the Missouri Assessment Program test without transferring out of the school and re-enrolling (Section 160.410.3); and

(16) Allows a charter school to receive tuition payments from districts in the same or an adjoining county for nonresident students who transfer to a charter school from an unaccredited district (Section 160.415).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill achieves many goals relating to charter schools including accountability, financial oversight, and the expedited renewal process.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Wood; Deborah Carr, University of Missouri-Columbia; Douglas Thaman, Missouri Charter Public School Association; Kelly Garrett, KIPP:St. Louis; Missouri National Education Association; Children's Education Council of Missouri; and Missouri Council of School Administrators.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.