

HB 704 -- VIRTUAL SCHOOLS

SPONSOR: Berry

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

(1) Increases, for purposes of the calculation and distribution of state school funding, the required attendance of a student enrolled in a district or charter school virtual class, upon course completion, from 94% to 95% of the hours of attendance possible for the class delivered in the nonvirtual program in the student's resident district or charter school. Course completion must be calculated in two increments, 50% completion and 100% completion, based on the student's completion of defined assignments and assessments, with distribution of state funding to a school district or charter school at each increment equal to 47.5%, instead of the current 47%, of hours of attendance possible for the course delivered in the nonvirtual program in a student's school district of residence or charter school;

(2) Specifies that a "virtual academy" is a school authorized to provide a full-time kindergarten through twelfth grade virtual program if it meets specified requirements;

(3) Allows any student residing in this state who is eligible to attend a public school in a county that has contained any portion of a school district that has been declared unaccredited or in an adjacent county to enroll in a virtual academy;

(4) Distinguishes between a virtual resident student and a virtual transfer student;

(5) Prohibits a virtual transfer student from being admitted to a virtual academy if the admission would cause the amount debited to the district of residence to exceed the amount credited to the district under the equity portion of the foundation formula; the Classroom Trust Fund; and the School District Trust Fund, commonly known as Proposition C;

(6) Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to debit the monthly state-aid payment made to the district of residence of a virtual transfer student in an amount equal to the state adequacy target for each student enrolled in the program and credit the same amount to the virtual academy, one-half in the month of half completion and one-half in the month of total completion;

(7) Specifies how the department is to distribute state-aid

payments in any year in which the foundation formula is less than fully funded and the state adequacy target amount used is lower than the state adequacy target. The department must transfer any federal special education and Title I funds associated with an individual virtual transfer student to the virtual academy; and

(8) Specifies that if a clearinghouse organization is created to provide school transfer availability information, it must provide information furnished to it by schools offering courses and programs to virtual transfer students.