

HB 2123 with HCA 1 -- MISSOURI COURSE ACCESS PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Spencer

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 8 to 2.

This bill establishes the Missouri Course Access Program. In its main provisions, the bill:

- (1) Specifies that the purpose of the program is to allow public school eligible students to enroll in on-line, blended, and face-to-face courses to supplement coursework offered at the school where the student is enrolled separate from the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program as provided (Section 161.1010, RSMo);
- (2) Allows the local education agency to review enrollment requests to ensure courses are academically appropriate and feasible to keep a student on track for an on-time graduation and requires the agency to inform students and families of their right to appeal any enrollment denials to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education decision within seven days (Section 161.1011);
- (3) Requires the department to establish an authorization process for course providers, no later than 90 days from the initial submission date, that meets established criteria; provide courses offering instructional rigor and scope (Section 161.1012);
- (4) Requires the department to publish the process established under these provisions, including any deadlines and any guidelines applicable to the submission and authorization process for providers (Section 161.1013);
- (5) Specifies the requirements for the department including publishing criteria; creating the catalog; publishing a link to the catalog on the department's website; establishing a time frame, including withdrawal dates; and maintaining an informed choice report on the website that includes specified information (Section 161.1014);
- (6) Requires the department to submit an annual report on the program and the participation of entities to the Governor and the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Joint Committee on Education that includes specified information. The report must be published on-line in an open format (Section 161.1017);
- (7) Requires school districts and charter schools to notify

students and parents as part of any course enrollment period or process of the availability of program courses in correspondence that is written in simple and accurate language, provide information by letter or email to students and parents at home and by at least two other means, and publish information and eligibility guidelines on the school and school district's websites (Section 161.1018);

(8) Requires the performance data of students who are enrolled in a course under these provisions to be counted in the school performance score for the school in which the student is enrolled full time (Section 161.1018);

(9) Specifies the determinations for per-course tuition under the program (Section 161.1019);

(10) Clarifies that the funding mechanism for the program must be paid from the department to the local education agency and from the local education agency to the course provider only for courses in which a student is enrolled and any remaining funds must remain with the local education agency in which the student is enrolled full time (Section 161.1019); and

(11) Bases the payment of tuition to course providers upon student success and the tuition to be made on a specified ratio (Section 161.1019).

The effective date for these provisions is January 1, 2017.

The provisions of the bill will expire six years from the effective date.

This bill is similar to HB 565 (2015).

HCA #1: This amendment removes the previous proposed language in the bill. Also, it incorporates the intent behind the proposed Missouri Course Access Program (MCAP) into existing statutes' current manifestation: the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MOVIP). As such, this amendment will: change the name of MOVIP to "The Missouri Course Access Program"; allow a student to enroll in up to two courses per year, free of charge, if the student is a public school student and the course is approved by a guidance counselor; require the state board of education to provide an easily accessible link for course vendors on the MCAP website; allow anyone to submit courses for approval and require vendors to accept monthly payments for students enrolled in their courses.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say the bill offers more educational opportunities for Missouri students. This will allow students more

chances to take classes they need or want to take. More choice for schools is more of a benefit than a hindrance.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Spencer; Missouri National Education Association; Missouri Education Reform Council; and Michael McShane.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say there was a report that came out in the fall on virtual education. The report states that for students who studied math on-line it was as if they had 180 fewer days of instruction. So, it's like those kids didn't receive math instruction for a year. There are concerns about DESE setting the fee for the program as the bill says "fair and reasonable fee" and is therefore ambiguous.

Testifying on the bill was Missouri Council Of School Administrators.