

HB 2594 -- ECONOMIC AND ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP ACT

SPONSOR: Burlison

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 12 to 0.

This bill establishes the Local Economic and Academic Partnership (LEAP) Program to encourage public and charter schools to enter into partnerships with local business entities in order to foster relationships that will benefit local community needs with respect to economic development and workforce training. In its main provisions, the bill:

- (1) Creates, within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, a Local Economic and Academic Partnership Council, consisting of 11 specified appointees and specifies the process for convening the first meeting and the duties incumbent upon the council;
- (2) Specifies that under the LEAP program, public schools are encouraged to partner with one or more entities including other public schools serving grades K-12, public and private institutions of higher education, local trade unions, and local businesses and industries;
- (3) Permits public schools to apply to the LEAP council for approval and acceptance into the program before entering into a partnership and requires the public school's application to contain evidence demonstrating that the partnership would benefit local students and meet local workforce needs in the local community;
- (4) Requires the application to outline a metric by which the partnership and student participation will be evaluated and contain a plan for oversight to ensure students gain real world experience and training and demonstrate educational and financial efficiencies in delivering services to the community through the program;
- (5) Requires an application for partnership approval to contain a specific plan to provide challenging program options for students to gain real world experience and training, increase student engagement in the local business community, provide challenging learning opportunities for local students, and create professional development opportunities for educators through internships, apprenticeships, or externships;
- (6) Requires the LEAP council to approve or reject a partnership application within 30 days of a public school's application for approval;

(7) Creates an incentive for participation in the LEAP program, by giving public schools full credit on attendance measurement criteria for the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP), regardless of a student's attendance, as long as the student is meeting state performance measures; 100% of the average daily attendance reimbursement and 100% attendance for purposes of the MSIP for on-line, hybrid, or proficiency-based courses capped at credit for one student annually; replacement or additional credit for a school's college and career readiness score on its annual performance report for students that can provide proof of mastery through a locally developed assessment system that proves competency; and the authority to employ a visiting scholar as a classroom teacher;

(8) Creates, in the state treasury, the Local Economic and Academic Partnership Fund, which consists of moneys appropriated by the General Assembly to establish and support the program established in these provisions and any gifts, grants, bequests, and devises;

(9) Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop a process to approve applications for distribution of appropriated funds under these provisions and permits the department to promulgate all necessary rules and regulations for the administration of these provisions;

(10) Requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to update all data systems and the Missouri school improvement plan, including all scoring guides, to accommodate districts that wish to implement a proficiency-based instruction and promotion system within their schools before the beginning of the 2016-17 school year; and

(11) Adds the LEAP council to the list of entities that are authorized to grant certificates of license to teach in the public schools of the state upon the basis of an application for a one-year visiting scholar teaching license and the appropriate fee; written verification from an administrator of an accredited or approved local education agency that the applicant will be employed if the license is issued; and documentation of exceptional talent or outstanding distinction in one or more subjects or fields.

The provisions of the LEAP program will automatically sunset six years after the effective date.

This bill is similar to HB 1256 (2015).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say this bill will help to make Missouri

one of the best states for employers to find quality employees. We put a lot of emphasis on our students pushing them to go to college but for a lot of students that's not what they want or their reality. This will help them get on the job training and would be a big benefit for students and schools. This will also help students to get out there and really experience the working world. The hands on portion of working is where people really learn how to do things. This will allow people with years or decades of experience in a field to teach students valuable work-marketable skills.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Burlison; Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Missouri Education Reform Council; Missouri Council of School Administrators; and Microsoft Corporation.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say they like the idea but have some reservations. We want to make sure those who are teaching students are qualified. We are concerned with the LEAP council appointments being made by the Joint Committee on Education.

Testifying on the bill was Otto Fajen, Missouri National Education Association.