

HCS SCS SB 904 -- ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

SPONSOR: Pearce

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Education by a vote of 9 to 1.

This bill prohibits school districts from determining whether a child is gifted based on the child's participation in an advanced placement course or international baccalaureate course. Whether a child is gifted must be determined using the statutory definition of "gifted children."

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, this bill also reduces a district's funding as described in the bill when it experiences a decrease in its gifted program enrollment of 20% or more from the previous school year. This provision shall not apply to school districts with an average daily attendance of 350 or less.

This provision shall be effective July 1, 2017.

This provision is similar to HB 1419 (2016) and HB 637 (2015).

This bill also provides that each school district may rely on technical coursework and skills assessments developed for industry-recognized certificates and credentials when establishing career and technical education offerings.

This provision is substantially similar to a provision contained in SCS SBs 620 & 582 (2016) and HCS SB 13 (2015).

This bill also allows, beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, any licensed educator to annually complete up to two hours of training or professional development in youth suicide awareness and prevention as part of the professional development hours required for State Board of Education certification. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall develop guidelines for training or professional development in youth suicide awareness and prevention. The department shall also develop materials that may be used for such training or professional development.

Each district shall adopt a policy for youth suicide awareness and prevention by July 1, 2018. The department shall develop a model policy by July 1, 2017, that districts may adopt. The department shall cooperate, consult with, and seek input from organizations that have expertise in youth suicide awareness and prevention. By July 1, 2021, and at least every three years thereafter, the

department shall request information and seek feedback from districts on their experience with the policy for youth suicide awareness and prevention. The department shall review this information and may use it to adapt the department's model policy.

The department shall post the information it receives from districts on its website. The department shall not post any confidential information or any information that personally identifies a student or school employee.

This provision is the same as SCS SB 646 (2016) and is similar to SB 328 (2015).

This bill also creates the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia. The task force will advise and make recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, and relevant state agencies. The task force will consist of 20 members, as described in the bill, with two members appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate and two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The task force will make recommendations for a statewide system for identification, intervention, and delivery of supports for students with dyslexia, as described in the bill.

The task force will hire or contract for hire specialist services to support the work of the task force as necessary with appropriations or from other available funding.

The Task Force will expire on August 31, 2018.

This provision is similar to SB 827 (2016) and to SB 548 and HCS HB 921 (2015) and HCS HB 1928 (2016).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that there seems to be a trend in schools that the number of gifted students that are served is declining. A distinction should be made between intelligent students and gifted students. A mandate is encouraged but in the alternative, a revenue reduction is helpful in order to ensure gifted students are getting adequate services.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Pearce; Missouri State Teachers Association; Microsoft Corporation; Missouri Education Reform Council; Gifted Association of Missouri; Missouri National Education Association; and Decoding Dyslexia.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.