

HCS HB 320 -- ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION (Fitzwater)

This bill relates to Elementary and Secondary Education.

SCHOOL BOARDS (Section 162.052, RSMo)

The bill allows registered voters to file a petition with the school board to add specified agenda items to any monthly school board meeting. The petition must be signed by at least 5% of the school district's registered voters that voted in the last school board election. The requirements for the petition language is specified in the bill and the school district must verify the petition requirements with the local election authority. A petition request for the same item may not be submitted more than once every six months. Any agenda item added in this manner, shall be added to the board agenda for the next meeting, taken up by the board following all relevant board policies, and voted on by the board within three meetings .

ELIGIBLE EDUCATION INSTITUTION AND MISSOURI EDUCATION PROGRAM (Sections 166.400 to 166.455;166.440, and 166.456)

This bill modifies the definition of an "eligible education institution" and changes the Missouri Education Savings Program to the "Missouri Education Program". The bill allows the State Treasurers office to delegate duties to the Missouri education program board

COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSE (Sections 170.018 and 170.036)

This bill modifies the definition of "computer science course" to include both a stand-alone computer course in the elementary, middle, and high school levels or any course that embeds computer science content within other subjects.

The bill will require public schools and charter schools in all school years after July 1, 2022 to offer at least one computer science course in high school, instruction in exploratory computer science in middle school, and the basics of computer science and computational thinking in elementary schools.

Districts and charter schools will annually submit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) a report of computer science courses offered in each school in the district, the number and percentage of students enrolled, and the number of computer science instructors, along with demographics and additional information specified in the bill.

The bill requires DESE to appoint a computer science supervisor to

be responsible for the posting of information to the Department's website.

Beginning in school years after July 1, 2022 public institutions of higher education will allow a computer science course counted toward a science or practical art state graduation credit to satisfy as an equivalent admission requirement.

The bill establishes the "Computer Science Education Task Force". The membership of the Task Force includes two members of the House of Representatives, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one by the Minority Leader, two members of the Senate with one appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate and one appointed by the Minority Leader, the Governor or his designee, the Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education or their designees and six members as appointed by the Commissioner of Education representing various interested parties as specified.

The mission of the Task Force is to develop a state strategic plan for expansion of computer science education programs statewide and the details of the components of that plan are outlined in the bill. The Task Force will hold its first meeting within one month of the effective date of the bill and submit a report outlining activities and recommendations for legislation to the General Assembly before June 30, 2022. The Task Force will dissolve June 30, 2023.