

HCS HB 942 -- SCHOOL ACCREDITATION CLASSIFICATIONS

SPONSOR: Haffner

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 11 to 5. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 2.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 942.

This bill modifies the public school accreditation and statewide assessment system. The bill allows for the statewide assessment system to track student performance from different schools if a student has transferred from one school to another. The bill defines "attendance center" as an individual public elementary or secondary school or charter school, and directs the State Board of Education (SBE), to collect and disseminate information on the attendance center level rather than the current overall district level. The bill adds race and ethnicity to the annual reporting requirements currently established, and requires that the report include improvement suggestions to be research based with citations.

The bill expands on the SBE classification and accreditation rule making authority by providing new categories of classification with specific methodology for making accreditation determinations. Districts in the bottom 10% of the state distribution will be classified as unaccredited, the bottom 25% will be provisionally accredited or unaccredited, and districts in the top 10% will be classified as accredited with distinction.

This bill expands on the SBE's rule making authority for academic achievement and academic performances by requiring that academic growth account for no less than 40% of the total accreditation score, and providing further instruction for the calculation of performance. The bill provides the SBE guidance on new rule making authority for local education agencies (LEA) that have attendance centers that become unaccredited and provisionally accredited. LEAs must develop and submit to the school board or governing agency a school improvement plan. The plan must be submitted to the school district or governing board within 60 days of receiving the designation and must include three-year goals for math and reading proficiency as outlined in the bill. LEAs are encouraged to develop innovation zones and partner with nonprofit organizations with expertise in school redesign and improvement. Any attendance center, school district, or charter school that is classified as provisionally accredited or unaccredited shall inform

all parents of students of the classification, along with details on student options and future school improvement plans.

Any attendance center that is a charter school and unaccredited for four consecutive years shall be reconstituted in partnership with an accredited charter organization or be closed and any LEA shall provide students attending any attendance center that has been provisionally accredited for five consecutive years the option to transfer to an accredited attendance center within the district

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall recognize and publish attendance centers that are accredited with distinction and demonstrate significant academic growth.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the current accreditation system does not have true accountability. Very few public school districts are unaccredited or provisionally accredited while less than 50% of students are proficient. This bill will hold attendance centers accountable so that a district can no longer hide poor performing schools with higher performance. The bill provides instruction for the State Board to evaluate the metric for growth in the current system as this is a better indication of student learning. Finally, supporters point out that this bill will help highlight what is working and what isn't and allow the public education system to work in partnership with experts to improve the state of education in Missouri.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Haffner; Krystal Barnett; Samantha Simpson; Eric Scroggins, The Opportunity Trust.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this will move public dollars into the private sector and that the top down approach that this legislation would impose and the fact that it is based predominately on test scores will not be an effective approach to improving education.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri NEA; Janet Tilley; Missouri School Boards' Association; and Missouri Association of School Administrators.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.