



Legislative Advocacy Information

Bill Number: SB 64
Bill Sponsor: Rupp
Bill Summary: Charter Schools

Current Bill Summary

SB 64 – This act modifies provisions relating to charter schools.

Section 160.400: Current law provides that charter schools may only be operated in the Kansas City and St. Louis City school districts. This act allows charter schools to be operated in school districts that are not classified as accredited by the State Board of Education or in any school district that for any two of the past three years has obtained a score on its annual performance evaluation consistent with the classification of provisionally accredited or unaccredited. Charter schools may continue to operate if the district in which they are located becomes classified as accredited at a later time. In addition, charter schools may continue to operate and serve the same geographic area if a change in school district boundary lines occurs because of annexation, consolidation, or dissolution.

Any private or public four-year college or university with an approved teacher preparation program and with its primary campus in Missouri may sponsor a charter school. The mayor of St. Louis City may sponsor a charter school.

When the Department retains and remits such funds to the sponsor of a charter school, the sponsor must make an appropriate determination of the following: it must expend no less than 90% of its sponsorship funds in support of its charter school sponsorship program, or as a direct investment in the sponsored schools; have fair procedures and rigorous criteria for its application process and grant charters only to developers who show capacity for establishing and operating a quality charter school; negotiates charter school contracts that clearly articulate the rights and responsibilities of each party as described in the act; conducts contract oversight; and designs and implements a transparent and rigorous process to make merit-based renewal decisions. In addition, charter schools may expend up to ten percent of their sponsorship funds for undesignated administrative costs.

Section 160.405: This act removes the condition that charter schools become local educational agencies for the sole purpose of seeking direct access to federal grants when a sponsor and governing board enter into a written agreement reflecting the charter school's decision to become a local educational agency.

Current law requires charter schools to maintain a surety bond based on the school's cash flow. This act would allow charter schools to maintain an insurance policy in the amount of \$500,000 or more to provide coverage in the event of employee theft.

Section 160.410: Charter schools whose mission includes student drop-out prevention or recovery must enroll nonresident pupils from the same or an adjacent county who submit a timely application. Preference will be given to resident pupils over non-resident pupils if there is insufficient capacity.

This act is similar to SB 1078 (2008), HB 2111 (2008) and contains a provision identical to SB 1027 (2008).

CSD Position:

CSD is opposed to the expansion of charter schools in districts beyond those presently established.

- Charter schools are not accountable to the same stringent standards as Missouri public schools and do not participate in the Missouri School Improvement Program, the accreditation process and data-reporting process that holds Missouri public schools accountable.
- Charter schools are exempt from most state laws that govern public schools.
- Charter schools reduce the overall revenue available to children in the public school districts in which they are located.
- A study from the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education published in January 2006 found that students in regular public schools do as well or significantly better than comparable students in private and charter schools. This large-scale study, financed by the U.S. Department of Education, compared 4th and 8th grade math scores of more than 340,000 students in 13,000 regular public, charter and private schools on the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly called "the nation's report card."
- In the final report of a four-year study of the federally-funded Public Charter Schools Program, the U.S. Department of Education found that many charter school authorizers lack the capacity to adequately oversee charter school operations, often lack authority to implement formal sanctions, and rarely invoke the authority they do have to revoke or not renew a charter. Where charters have been revoked or not renewed, the decision has been linked to noncompliance with state and federal regulations, and to financial problems more than problems with academic performance.
- The most recent state test results for charter schools in St. Louis indicate that the majority of charter schools under perform St. Louis Public Schools.

CSD Suggestions:

- Charter schools should be limited to the districts in which they presently exist until such time as they prove themselves to be a viable alternative to public schools.
- Rigorous academic standards should be developed for charter schools.
- Accreditation standards should be developed for charter schools.



About Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis, Inc. (CSD)

CSD is a non-profit education consortium serving 65 public school districts in Missouri – more than 1/3 of the students in our State attend CSD member districts. CSD services to member districts include character education, communications, conferences, cooperative purchasing, educational video programs, insurance, legislative advocacy, professional development, and technology.

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