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Education Omnibus: Senate Bill 681

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE SUMMARY

[Senate Bill 681 & 662 \(O'Laughlin\)](#) started out as a detailed literacy and school innovation bill. It was loaded up in the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee and on the House floor. The bill was modified twice in a conference committee. Here's a summary of the bill:

1. **Drinking Water:** Requires districts to test water for lead, make plans to remediate lead, provide information to the public and install filters or provide purified water when lead levels are too high.
2. **Consent to Spank:** Requires parents to be notified and give written permission before corporeal punishment.
3. **Child Abuse Investigation:** Removes authority of school district to first investigate claims of abuse by school district employees.
4. **Competency-Based Education:** Directs DESE to create requirements for obtaining a diploma for competency-based education. Students can remain in school until what would have been their 12th grade year. If students graduate early, the district may continue to count the student for state aid but must provide 90% of funding into a 529 account for the student. Creates competency-based education task force and grant program.
5. **Adult High Schools:** Allows for virtual learning in adult high schools and modifies childcare requirements for those schools.
6. **Holocaust Education:** Establishes Holocaust Education Week in April and requires a week of instruction on the Holocaust for grades 6-12, starting with a pilot program and expanding in 2025-26.
7. **Community Engagement and Agendas:** Requires a community engagement policy and allows a resident of the district to put an item on the board's agenda after meeting with the superintendent or designee.
8. **Subdistricting:** Allows voters to decide to divide a school district into subdistricts for the election of school board members.
9. **Gifted:** Requires school districts with 3% or more students testing as gifted to provide gifted instruction. Schools with 350 or fewer students do not need a gifted certified teacher but the teacher must have professional development.
10. **Special Ed Funding:** Excludes state funding for high need special education students when calculating the per student expenditures to determine future high need funding for special education services in schools of 500 students or fewer.
11. **Braille:** Requires instruction in Braille assistive technology and orientation and mobility for blind and visually impaired students, unless IEP determines not appropriate.
12. **Recovery High School:** Allows for four pilot high schools for students with a substance use disorder.
13. **Visiting Scholars:** Expands the visiting scholars teacher certificate to allow for a 2-year teaching certificate for those willing to work in difficult to staff schools or high-need subject areas. Also allows for certification of teachers who do not pass the MEGA examinations if they receive positive evaluations and a recommendation from the school board.

- 14. Districts in Two Counties:** Allows for three districts (Gasconade R-II, Maries R-II and W. St. Francis R-IV) that are located in more than once county to use the county with the higher dollar value modifier for state funding.
- 15. Sub Certificates:** Provides four-year substitute teaching certificates, lowers the number of college credits required and allows for a certificate with a high school diploma and completion of an online course. Bill has an emergency clause for this section. Allows for more substitute opportunities for retirees.
- 16. Sharing Superintendents:** Provides financial incentives for up to 5 years for districts to share superintendents.
- 17. Make Up Days:** Allows districts to make up inclement weather days proportionally for half day programs (preschool).
- 18. Books for Kids:** Establishes the Imagination Library Program of Missouri to provide free books to children ages 0-5 as an affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.
- 19. Career Ladder:** Expands career ladder program to require recognition of activities such as coaching, mentoring, receiving additional training, or assisting students with postsecondary education preparation and increases state funding match to 60 percent.
- 20. Transportation:** Authorizes student transportation in vehicles other than school buses.
- 21. Computer Science:** Requires at least one computer science course in high school and creates a task force to develop a plan for expanding computer science education.
- 22. Suicide Prevention:** Offers suicide prevention training for teachers and requires the number of a suicide hotline printed on school ID cards in grades 7 - 12 when issued.
- 23. Workforce Diploma Program:** Assist adult dropout students in obtaining a high school diploma and develop employability and career technical skills.
- 24. Bottom 5% Reports:** Requires parental notice if a school is scoring in the bottom 5% APR scores and requires the school district to post its state ranking.
- 25. Nonresident Attendance:** Allows tuition-free attendance for nonresident students if a parent owns, or is a beneficiary of a trust that owns, residential or agricultural real property in the non-resident district. The property must have been owned for four consecutive years and the owner or trust must pay at least \$2,000 of school taxes annually. The nonresident district must be in the same county in which the student resides.
- 26. Mental Health Awareness:** Requires mental health awareness training in high schools.
- 27. AP College Credit:** Requires Missouri colleges to give credit to students who score at least a 3 on an Advanced Placement examination.
- 28. Seizure Disorders:** Requires school districts to have an individualized health care plan and emergency plan for all students with seizure disorders and to train all staff every two years on the care of students with seizure disorders. Provides immunity from liability for school staff acting in good faith. This has an emergency clause.