

HB 2630 -- SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES

SPONSOR: Black

This bill requires that school districts expand the current definition of harassment to include bullying that meets the level of harassment as a reportable offense to law enforcement (Section 160.261, RSMo).

The bill adds the use of offensive racial epithets and excludes self-defense from the definition of bullying. School district policies on bullying are also modified and include written documentation of each report, procedures for investigations, and intervention on behalf of the bully.

If a school district or charter school fails to report bullying incidents, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will withhold 10% of monthly funding until the school is in compliance. Districts or charter schools that do not provide intervention or follow procedures on bullying will have money withheld in the amount of the State adequacy target multiplied by the number of failures. Multiple occurrences of bullying in a single semester by a student will also result in a financial penalty.

The bill provides for protection from civil liability for school districts, charter schools, and the employees of the district or charter school if procedures are properly followed (Section 160.775).

The bill adds bullying to the list of offenses that are reportable to law enforcement and adds the Commissioner of Education for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the governing board of a charter school to the current list for which reporting must occur. School officials that neglect or refuse to perform the reporting requirements must be referred to the State Board of Education for disciplinary proceedings to include suspension of such individual's certificate (Section 167.117).