HB 241: Emergency Days and Virtual Programs

What the Bill Does

- **Make-Up for Missed Attendance Days:** Allows districts affected by disasters to adjust calendars and make up lost hours by June 4, 2025, with potential waiver of five days.
- **Operations and Accountability of Virtual Programs:** This bill sets rules for how full-time virtual schooling programs in public schools are run and held accountable.
  - Nonresident student enrollment is limited to 1% of last year's total public-school enrollment, with some exceptions.
  - Nonresident enrollment in virtual programs ends by June 30, 2028.
  - Districts must set policies for virtual student participation in state-required tests.
  - Virtual student enrollment is stopped in districts with schools in the lowest 5% for performance, with exceptions.
  - Virtual teachers in middle and high schools are limited to 300 student hours per day.

Why It Matters

By helping districts maintain stable funding during emergencies and holding virtual learning to high standards, this bill ensures students can stay on track to meet graduation requirements and that Kentucky's impressive high school graduation ranking, as reported in the Big Bold Future Report (placing Kentucky third in the nation), is both meaningful and reflective of a quality education regardless of through which medium students learn.

- **Fair Treatment in Emergencies:** Districts in Eastern Kentucky affected by flooding or a tragic shooting in the 2024–2025 school year won't lose funding due to lower attendance caused by these events. Districts that used 10 or fewer NTI days can

deduct five extra low-attendance days when calculating funding, in addition to the five already allowed.

- **Balancing Innovation and Accountability:** As virtual learning grows in Kentucky, it's important to move carefully and set clear rules to make sure students get a high-quality education. Districts that do well with in-person learning are more likely to run strong virtual programs. These programs should be held to the same standards as all public schools.

How Do We Make This Bill Work in the Real World

- **Share Impact of Emergency Days:** KDE should work with districts to report how emergency day policies affected funding and services in Eastern Kentucky. This will help shape fairer policies in the future.
- **Study Virtual Learning Programs:** A task force should be created to look into the cost and success of virtual learning in public schools. The study should include:
  - Setting clear rules to measure student success, teacher quality, and how well these programs work
  - Make sure virtual programs grow at a pace they can handle and are held accountable
  - Figuring out the real cost of running strong and reliable virtual programs.
  - Helping families understand the benefits of in-person learning and the limits of virtual learning
  - Requiring current virtual programs to share data regularly
  - Looking at how virtual programs affect student numbers and funding in the districts students come from