

FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
[TRULY AGREED TO AND FINALLY PASSED]

# HOUSE BILL NO. 490

## 95TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1080L.01T

2009

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### AN ACT

To repeal section 160.545, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to the A+ Schools Program.

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*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:*

Section A. Section 160.545, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 160.545, to read as follows:

160.545. 1. There is hereby established within the department of elementary and secondary education the "A+ Schools Program" to be administered by the commissioner of education. The program shall consist of grant awards made to public secondary schools that demonstrate a commitment to ensure that:

(1) All students be graduated from school;

(2) All students complete a selection of high school studies that is challenging and for which there are identified learning expectations; and

(3) All students proceed from high school graduation to a college or postsecondary vocational or technical school or high-wage job with work place skill development opportunities.

2. The state board of education shall promulgate rules and regulations for the approval of grants made under the program to schools that:

(1) Establish measurable districtwide performance standards for the goals of the program outlined in subsection 1 of this section; and

(2) Specify the knowledge, skills and competencies, in measurable terms, that students must demonstrate to successfully complete any individual course offered by the school, and any course of studies which will qualify a student for graduation from the school; and

(3) Do not offer a general track of courses that, upon completion, can lead to a high school diploma; and

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

19           (4) Require rigorous coursework with standards of competency in basic academic  
20 subjects for students pursuing vocational and technical education as prescribed by rule and  
21 regulation of the state board of education; and

22           (5) Have a partnership plan developed in cooperation and with the advice of local  
23 business persons, labor leaders, parents, and representatives of college and postsecondary  
24 vocational and technical school representatives, with the plan then approved by the local board  
25 of education. The plan shall specify a mechanism to receive information on an annual basis from  
26 those who developed the plan in addition to senior citizens, community leaders, and teachers to  
27 update the plan in order to best meet the goals of the program as provided in subsection 1 of this  
28 section. Further, the plan shall detail the procedures used in the school to identify students that  
29 may drop out of school and the intervention services to be used to meet the needs of such  
30 students. The plan shall outline counseling and mentoring services provided to students who will  
31 enter the work force upon graduation from high school, address apprenticeship and intern  
32 programs, and shall contain procedures for the recruitment of volunteers from the community  
33 of the school to serve in schools receiving program grants.

34           3. A school district may participate in the program irrespective of its accreditation  
35 classification by the state board of education, provided it meets all other requirements.

36           4. By rule and regulation, the state board of education may determine a local school  
37 district variable fund match requirement in order for a school or schools in the district to receive  
38 a grant under the program. However, no school in any district shall receive a grant under the  
39 program unless the district designates a salaried employee to serve as the program coordinator,  
40 with the district assuming a minimum of one-half the cost of the salary and other benefits  
41 provided to the coordinator. Further, no school in any district shall receive a grant under the  
42 program unless the district makes available facilities and services for adult literacy training as  
43 specified by rule of the state board of education.

44           5. For any school that meets the requirements for the approval of the grants authorized  
45 by this section and specified in subsection 2 of this section for three successive school years, by  
46 August first following the third such school year, the commissioner of education shall present  
47 a plan to the superintendent of the school district in which such school is located for the waiver  
48 of rules and regulations to promote flexibility in the operations of the school and to enhance and  
49 encourage efficiency in the delivery of instructional services in the school. The provisions of  
50 other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the plan presented to the superintendent shall provide  
51 a summary waiver, with no conditions, for the pupil testing requirements pursuant to section  
52 160.257 in the school. Further, the provisions of other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the  
53 plan shall detail a means for the waiver of requirements otherwise imposed on the school related  
54 to the authority of the state board of education to classify school districts pursuant to subdivision

55 (9) of section 161.092, RSMo, and such other rules and regulations as determined by the  
56 commissioner of education, except such waivers shall be confined to the school and not other  
57 schools in the school district unless such other schools meet the requirements of this subsection.  
58 However, any waiver provided to any school as outlined in this subsection shall be void on June  
59 thirtieth of any school year in which the school fails to meet the requirements for the approval  
60 of the grants authorized by this section as specified in subsection 2 of this section.

61 6. For any school year, grants authorized by subsections 1 to 3 of this section shall be  
62 funded with the amount appropriated for this program, less those funds necessary to reimburse  
63 eligible students pursuant to subsection 7 of this section.

64 7. The commissioner of education shall, by rule and regulation of the state board of  
65 education and with the advice of the coordinating board for higher education, establish a  
66 procedure for the reimbursement of the cost of tuition, books and fees to any public community  
67 college or [within the limits established in subsection 9 of this section any two-year public or  
68 private] vocational or technical school **or within the limits established in subsection 9 of this**  
69 **section for any two-year private vocational or technical school** for any student:

70 (1) Who has attended a public high school in the state for at least three years immediately  
71 prior to graduation that meets the requirements of subsection 2 of this section, except that  
72 students who are active duty military dependents who, in the school year immediately preceding  
73 graduation, meet all other requirements of this subsection and are attending a school that meets  
74 the requirements of subsection 2 of this section shall be exempt from the three-year attendance  
75 requirement of this subdivision; and

76 (2) Who has made a good faith effort to first secure all available federal sources of  
77 funding that could be applied to the reimbursement described in this subsection; and

78 (3) Who has earned a minimal grade average while in high school as determined by rule  
79 of the state board of education, and other requirements for the reimbursement authorized by this  
80 subsection as determined by rule and regulation of said board.

81 8. The commissioner of education shall develop a procedure for evaluating the  
82 effectiveness of the program described in this section. Such evaluation shall be conducted  
83 annually with the results of the evaluation provided to the governor, speaker of the house, and  
84 president pro tempore of the senate.

85 9. For a two-year [public or] private vocational or technical school to obtain  
86 reimbursements under subsection 7 of this section[, except for those schools that are receiving  
87 reimbursements on August 28, 2008,] the following requirements shall be satisfied:

88 (1) Such two-year [public or] private vocational or technical school shall be a member  
89 of the North Central Association and be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission as of  
90 July 1, 2008, and maintain such accreditation;

91           (2) Such two-year [public or] private vocational or technical school shall be designated  
92 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;

93           (3) No two-year [public or] private vocational or technical school shall receive tuition  
94 reimbursements in excess of the tuition rate charged by a public community college for course  
95 work offered by the private vocational or technical school within the service area of such college;  
96 and

97           (4) The reimbursements provided to any two-year private vocational or technical school  
98 shall not violate the provisions of article IX, section 8, or article I, section 7, of the Missouri  
99 Constitution or the first amendment of the United States Constitution.

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