

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 1279

97TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES ENGLISH (Sponsor), HICKS, LEARA, LICHTENEGGER, ZERR,
MIMS, MCCAHERTY, JUSTUS, KOLKMEYER, MCGAUGH, MUNTZEL, WALKER, RUNIONS,
LAFAVER, WIELAND, FUNDERBURK, BURNS, BLACK, KELLEY (127),
GATSCHENBERGER AND JONES (110) (Co-sponsors).

4230L.011

D. ADAM CRUMBLISS, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

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

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Section A. Section 160.545, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 160.545, to read as follows: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] **scholarships** made to **graduates of** public **and private** secondary schools [that demonstrate a commitment to ensure that] **who**:

(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] **(2)** 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. **Pursuant to the A+ program**, 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)] **that** specify the knowledge, skills and competencies, in measurable terms, that students must demonstrate to successfully complete any individual course offered by [the] **a**

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.

16 school[,] and any course of studies which will qualify a student for graduation from [the] **such**
17 school[;] **and does not include any general track course, that upon completion, counts**
18 **toward a high school diploma,** and

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

21 (4) Require] **further specify** rigorous coursework with standards of competency in basic
22 academic subjects for students pursuing vocational and technical education [as prescribed by rule
23 and regulation of the state board of education; and

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

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

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

46 5. For any school that meets the requirements for the approval of the grants authorized
47 by this section and specified in subsection 2 of this section for three successive school years, by
48 August first following the third such school year, the commissioner of education shall present
49 a plan to the superintendent of the school district in which such school is located for the waiver
50 of rules and regulations to promote flexibility in the operations of the school and to enhance and
51 encourage efficiency in the delivery of instructional services in the school. The provisions of

52 other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the plan presented to the superintendent shall provide
53 a summary waiver, with no conditions, for the pupil testing requirements pursuant to section
54 160.257 in the school. Further, the provisions of other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the
55 plan shall detail a means for the waiver of requirements otherwise imposed on the school related
56 to the authority of the state board of education to classify school districts pursuant to subdivision
57 (9) of section 161.092 and such other rules and regulations as determined by the commissioner
58 of education, except such waivers shall be confined to the school and not other schools in the
59 school district unless such other schools meet the requirements of this subsection. However,
60 any waiver provided to any school as outlined in this subsection shall be void on June thirtieth
61 of any school year in which the school fails to meet the requirements for the approval of the
62 grants authorized by this section as specified in subsection 2 of this section.

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

66 [7.] 3. The commissioner of education shall, by rule and regulation of the state board of
67 education and with the advice of the coordinating board for higher education, establish a
68 procedure for the [reimbursement] **payment** of the cost of tuition, books and fees to any public
69 community college or vocational or technical school or within the limits established in
70 subsection [9] **11** of this section for any two-year private vocational or technical school for any
71 student:

72 (1) Who has attended a public **or private** high school in the state for at least three years
73 immediately prior to graduation [that meets the requirements of subsection 2 of this section],
74 except that students who are active duty military dependents, and students who are dependants
75 of retired military who relocate to Missouri within one year of the date of the parent's retirement
76 from active duty, who, in the school year immediately preceding graduation, meet all other
77 requirements of this subsection and are attending a school that meets the requirements of
78 [subsection 2 of] this section shall be exempt from the three-year attendance requirement of this
79 subdivision; and

80 (2) Who has made a good faith effort to first secure all available [federal] sources of
81 funding that could be applied to the [reimbursement described in this subsection] **costs covered**
82 **by this scholarship program**; and

83 (3) Who has earned a [minimal] grade **point average of at least two and one-half points**
84 **on a four-point scale, or its equivalent on another scale**, while in high school [as determined
85 by rule of the state board of education,] ; and

86 (4) **Meets** other requirements for the [reimbursement] **payment** authorized by this
87 subsection as determined by rule and regulation of said board.

88 **4. Student financial incentives shall be available for a period of four years after**
89 **high school graduation.**

90 **5. To be eligible for a student financial incentive, each student shall:**

91 **(1) Have attended a public or private high school in Missouri for three consecutive**
92 **years prior to high school graduation;**

93 **(2) Have graduated from high school with an overall grade point average of two**
94 **and five-tenths or higher on a four-point scale, or its equivalent on another scale, or have**
95 **graduated from a high school with documented mastery of institutionally identified skills**
96 **that would equate to a two and five-tenths grade point average or higher on a four-point**
97 **scale;**

98 **(3) Have performed at least fifty hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring;**

99 **(4) Have at least a ninety-five percent attendance record overall for grades nine**
100 **through twelve; and**

101 **(5) Have maintained a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use**
102 **of drugs and alcohol.**

103 **6. To maintain eligibility, each participating student shall, during the four-year**
104 **period of incentive availability:**

105 **(1) Enroll in and attend on a full-time basis a Missouri public community college,**
106 **vocational or technical school, state technical college, or within the limits established in**
107 **subsection 11 of this section, any two-year private vocational or technical school;**

108 **(2) Maintain a grade point average of two and five-tenths points or higher on a**
109 **four-point scale, or its equivalent on another scale; and**

110 **(3) Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of**
111 **drugs and alcohol.**

112 **7. The financial incentives shall be made available, subject to appropriation, only**
113 **after the student has made a documented good faith effort to first secure all available**
114 **postsecondary student financial assistance funds that do not require repayment.**

115 **8. Subject to appropriation, the financial incentives shall only be made available**
116 **to pay the unpaid balance of the cost of tuition, general fees, and up to fifty percent of the**
117 **book cost after all postsecondary student financial assistance funds have been applied to**
118 **these costs. If changes are made to the above incentives, the department of elementary and**
119 **secondary education shall provide payments in the following order of priority:**

120 **(1) The full amount of tuition;**

121 **(2) The general fees; and**

122 **(3) Up to fifty percent of the book cost.**

123 **9. Missouri public community colleges, vocational or technical schools, state**
124 **technical colleges, and two-year private vocational or technical schools shall verify, prior**
125 **to payment, for each student intending to participate in the program at their institution**
126 **that:**

- 127 **(1) By the end of the first semester of the student's participation:**
128 **(a) Verification of student eligibility has been received from the high school from**
129 **which the student graduated;**
130 **(b) The eligible student is enrolled as a full-time student;**
131 **(c) A good faith effort has been made to secure all available postsecondary student**
132 **financial assistance funds; and**
133 **(d) After all available postsecondary student financial assistance funds are applied,**
134 **the student shall receive financial incentive funds. The amount of funds shall depend on**
135 **the remaining costs of tuition, general fees, and up to fifty percent of the book cost to**
136 **attend that institution, subject to appropriation; and**
137 **(2) During the second and subsequent semesters of the student's participation:**
138 **(a) The eligible student continues to be enrolled as a full-time student;**
139 **(b) Good faith efforts continue to be made to secure all available postsecondary**
140 **student financial assistance funds;**
141 **(c) The student has earned and maintains a grade point average of two and**
142 **five-tenths points or higher on a four-point scale, or its equivalent on another scale; and**
143 **(d) After all other available postsecondary student financial assistance funds are**
144 **applied, the student shall receive financial incentive funds. The amount of funds shall be**
145 **subject to appropriation and shall depend on the remaining costs of tuition, general fees,**
146 **and up to fifty percent of the book cost to attend that institution.**

147 **[8.] 10.** The commissioner of education shall develop a procedure for evaluating the
148 effectiveness of the **scholarship** program described in this section. Such evaluation shall be
149 conducted annually with the results of the evaluation provided to the governor, speaker of the
150 house, and president pro tempore of the senate.

151 **[9.] 11.** For a two-year private vocational or technical school to obtain reimbursements
152 under subsection **[7] 3** of this section, the following requirements shall be satisfied:

- 153 **(1) Such two-year private vocational or technical school shall be a member of the North**
154 **Central Association and be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission as of July 1, 2008,**
155 **and maintain such accreditation;**
156 **(2) Such two-year private vocational or technical school shall be designated as a**
157 **501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;**

158 (3) No two-year private vocational or technical school shall receive tuition
159 reimbursements in excess of the tuition rate charged by a public community college for course
160 work offered by the private vocational or technical school within the service area of such college;
161 and

162 (4) The reimbursements provided to any two-year private vocational or technical school
163 shall not violate the provisions of Article IX, Section 8, or Article I, Section 7, of the Missouri
164 Constitution or the first amendment of the United States Constitution.

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