

SECOND REGULAR SESSION
[TRULY AGREED TO AND FINALLY PASSED]
SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
HOUSE BILL NO. 1614
97TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4603S.04T

2014

AN ACT

To repeal section 161.825, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to educational services for students with qualifying needs.

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

Section A. Section 161.825, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 161.825, to read as follows:

161.825. 1. This section shall be known and may be cited as "Bryce's Law".

2. As used in this section, the following terms mean:

(1) "Autism spectrum disorder", pervasive developmental disorder; Asperger syndrome; childhood disintegrative disorder; Rett syndrome; and autism;

(2) "Contribution", a donation of cash, stock, bonds, or other marketable securities, or real property;

(3) "Department", the department of elementary and secondary education;

(4) "Director", the commissioner of education;

(5) **"Dyslexia therapy", an appropriate specialized dyslexia instructional program that is systematic, multisensory, and research-based offered in a small group setting to teach students the components of reading instruction including but not limited to phonemic awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics, instruction on linguistic proficiency and fluency with patterns of language so that words and sentences are carriers of meaning, and strategies that students use for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency and comprehension delivered by qualified personnel;**

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 [(5)] **(6)** "Educational scholarships", grants to students **or children** to cover all or part
17 of the tuition and fees at a qualified nonpublic school, a qualified public school, or a qualified
18 service provider, including transportation;

19 [(6)] **(7)** "Eligible child", any child from birth to age five living in Missouri who has an
20 individualized family services program under the first steps program, sections 160.900 to
21 160.933, and whose parent or guardian has completed the complaint procedure under the
22 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C, and has received an unsatisfactory response;
23 or any child from birth to age five who has been evaluated for [special] **qualifying** needs as
24 defined in this section by a person qualified to perform evaluations under the first steps program
25 and has been determined to have [special needs] **a qualifying need** but who falls below the
26 threshold for eligibility by no less than twenty-five percent;

27 [(7)] **(8)** "Eligible student", any elementary or secondary student who attended public
28 school in Missouri the preceding semester, or who will be attending school in Missouri for the
29 first time, who has an individualized education program based on a [special] **qualifying** needs
30 condition or who has a medical **or clinical** diagnosis by a qualified health professional of a
31 [special] **qualifying** needs condition **which in the case of dyslexia, may be based on the C-**
32 **TOPP assessment as an initial indicator of dyslexia and confirmed by further medical or**
33 **clinical diagnosis;**

34 [(8)] **(9)** "Parent", includes a guardian, custodian, or other person with authority to act
35 on behalf of the **student or** child;

36 [(9)] **(10)** "Program", the program established in this section;

37 [(10)] **(11)** "Qualified health professional", a person licensed under chapter 334 or 337
38 who possesses credentials as described in rules promulgated jointly by the department of
39 elementary and secondary education and the department of mental health to make a diagnosis
40 of a student's [special] **qualifying** needs for this program;

41 [(11)] **(12)** "Qualified school", either an accredited public elementary or secondary
42 school in a district that is accredited without provision outside of the district in which a student
43 resides or an accredited nonpublic elementary or secondary school in Missouri that complies with
44 all of the requirements of the program and complies with all state laws that apply to nonpublic
45 schools regarding criminal background checks for employees and excludes from employment
46 any person not permitted by state law to work in a nonpublic school;

47 [(12)] **(13)** "Qualified service provider", a person or agency authorized by the
48 department to provide services under the first steps program, sections 160.900 to 160.933, **and**
49 **in the case of a provider offering dyslexia therapy, the term also includes a person with**
50 **national certification as an academic language therapist;**

51 **(14) "Qualifying needs", an autism spectrum disorder, Down Syndrome, Angelman**
52 **Syndrome, cerebral palsy, or dyslexia;**

53 **(15) "Scholarship granting organization", a charitable organization that:**

54 (a) Is exempt from federal income tax;

55 (b) Complies with the requirements of this program;

56 (c) Provides education scholarships to students attending qualified schools of their
57 parents' choice or to children receiving services from qualified service providers; and

58 (d) Does not accept contributions on behalf of any eligible student or eligible child from
59 any donor with any obligation to provide any support for the eligible student or eligible child[;

60 (14) "Special needs", an autism spectrum disorder, Down Syndrome, Angelman
61 Syndrome, or cerebral palsy].

62 3. The department of elementary and secondary education shall develop a master list of
63 resources available to the parents of children with an autism spectrum disorder **or dyslexia** and
64 shall maintain a web page for the information. The department shall also actively seek financial
65 resources in the form of grants and donations that may be devoted to scholarship funds or to
66 clinical trials for behavioral interventions that may be undertaken by qualified service providers.
67 The department may contract out or delegate these duties to a nonprofit organization. Priority
68 in referral for funding shall be given to children who have not yet entered elementary school.

69 4. The director shall determine, at least annually, which organizations in this state may
70 be classified as scholarship granting organizations. The director may require of an organization
71 seeking to be classified as a scholarship granting organization whatever information [which] **that**
72 is reasonably necessary to make such a determination. The director shall classify an organization
73 as a scholarship granting organization if such organization meets the definition set forth in this
74 section.

75 5. The director shall establish a procedure by which a donor can determine if an
76 organization has been classified as a scholarship granting organization. Scholarship granting
77 organizations shall be permitted to decline a contribution from a donor.

78 6. Each scholarship granting organization shall provide information to the director
79 concerning the identity of each donor making a contribution to the scholarship granting
80 organization.

81 7. (1) The director shall annually make a determination on the number of students in
82 Missouri with an individualized education program based upon [special] **qualifying** needs as
83 defined in this section. The director shall use ten percent of this number to determine the
84 maximum number of students to receive scholarships from a scholarship granting organization
85 in that year for students with [special] **qualifying** needs who have at the time of application an
86 individualized education program, plus a number calculated by the director by applying the

87 state's latest available autism, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, [and] Angelman Syndrome, **and**
88 **dyslexia** incidence rates to the state's population of children from age five to nineteen who are
89 not enrolled in public schools and taking ten percent of that number. The total of these two
90 calculations shall constitute the maximum number of scholarships available to students.

91 (2) The director shall also annually make a determination on the number of children in
92 Missouri whose parent or guardian has enrolled the child in first steps, received an individualized
93 family services program based on [special] **qualifying** needs, and filed a complaint through the
94 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C, and received [a negative] **an unsatisfactory**
95 response. In addition to this number, the director shall apply the latest available autism, cerebral
96 palsy, Down Syndrome, [and] Angelman Syndrome, **and dyslexia** incidence rates to the latest
97 available census information for children from birth to age five and determine ten percent of that
98 number for the maximum number of scholarships for children.

99 (3) The director shall publicly announce the number of each category of scholarship
100 opportunities available each year. Once a scholarship granting organization has decided to
101 provide a student or child with a scholarship, it shall promptly notify the director. The director
102 shall keep a running tally of the number of scholarships granted in the order in which they were
103 reported. Once the tally reaches the annual limit of scholarships for eligible students or children,
104 the director shall notify all of the participating scholarship granting organizations that they shall
105 not issue any more scholarships and any more receipts for contributions. If the scholarship
106 granting organizations have not expended all of their available scholarship funds in that year at
107 the time when the limit is reached, the available scholarship funds may be carried over into the
108 next year. These unexpended funds shall not be counted as part of the requirement in
109 subdivision (3) of subsection [10] **8** of this section for that year. Any receipt for a scholarship
110 contribution issued by a scholarship granting organization before the director has publicly
111 announced the student or child limit has been reached shall be valid. **Beginning with school**
112 **year 2016-17, the director may adjust the allocation of the proportion of scholarships using**
113 **information on unmet need and use patterns from the previous school years. The director**
114 **shall provide notice of the change to the state board of education for its approval.**

115 8. Each scholarship granting organization participating in the program shall:

116 (1) Notify the department of its intent to provide educational scholarships to students
117 attending qualified schools or children receiving services from qualified service providers;

118 (2) Provide a department-approved receipt to donors for contributions made to the
119 organization;

120 (3) Ensure that at least ninety percent of its revenue from donations is spent on
121 educational scholarships, and that all revenue from interest or investments is spent on
122 educational scholarships;

123 (4) Ensure that the scholarships provided do not exceed an average of twenty thousand
124 dollars per eligible child or fifty thousand dollars per eligible student;

125 (5) Inform the parent or guardian of the student or child applying for a scholarship that
126 accepting the scholarship is tantamount to a parentally placed private school student pursuant to
127 34 CFR 300.130 and, thus, neither the department nor any Missouri public school is responsible
128 to provide the student with a free appropriate public education pursuant to the Individuals with
129 Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;

130 (6) Distribute periodic scholarship payments as checks made out to a student's or child's
131 parent and mailed to the qualified school where the student is enrolled or qualified service
132 provider used by the child. The parent or guardian shall endorse the check before it can be
133 deposited;

134 (7) Cooperate with the department to conduct criminal background checks on all of its
135 employees and board members and exclude from employment or governance any individual who
136 might reasonably pose a risk to the appropriate use of contributed funds;

137 (8) Ensure that scholarships are portable during the school year and can be used at any
138 qualified school that accepts the eligible student or at a different qualified service provider for
139 an eligible child according to a parent's wishes. If a student moves to a new qualified school
140 during a school year or to a different qualified service provider for an eligible child, the
141 scholarship amount may be prorated;

142 (9) Demonstrate its financial accountability by:

143 (a) Submitting a financial information report for the organization that complies with
144 uniform financial accounting standards established by the department and conducted by a
145 certified public accountant; and

146 (b) Having the auditor certify that the report is free of material misstatements;

147 (10) Demonstrate its financial viability, if the organization is to receive donations of fifty
148 thousand dollars or more during the school year, by filing with the department before the start
149 of the school year:

150 (a) A surety bond payable to the state in an amount equal to the aggregate amount of
151 contributions expected to be received during the school year; or

152 (b) Financial information that demonstrates the financial viability of the scholarship
153 granting organization.

154 9. Each scholarship granting organization shall ensure that each participating school or
155 service provider that accepts its scholarship students or children shall:

156 (1) Comply with all health and safety laws or codes that apply to nonpublic schools or
157 service providers;

158 (2) Hold a valid occupancy permit if required by its municipality;

159 (3) Certify that it will comply with 42 U.S.C. Section 1981, as amended;

(4) Provide academic accountability to parents of the students or children in the program by regularly reporting to the parent on the student's or child's progress;

(5) Certify that in providing any educational services or behavior strategies to a scholarship recipient with a **medical or clinical** diagnosis of or an individualized education program based upon autism spectrum disorder it will:

(a) Adhere to the best practices recommendations of the Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative or document why it is varying from the guidelines;

(b) Not use any evidence-based interventions that have been found ineffective by the [commission on Medicare] **centers for Medicare and Medicaid services** as described in the Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative guide to evidence-based interventions; and

(c) Provide documentation in the student's or child's record of the rationale for the use of any intervention that is categorized as unestablished, insufficient evidence, or level 3 by the Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative guide to evidence-based interventions; and

(6) Certify that in providing any educational services or behavior strategies to a scholarship recipient with a **medical or clinical** diagnosis of, or an individualized family services program based upon Down Syndrome, Angelman Syndrome, [or] cerebral palsy, **or dyslexia**, it will use student, teacher, teaching, and school influences that rank in the zone of desired effects in the meta-analysis of John Hattie, or equivalent analyses as determined by the department, or document why it is using a method that has not been determined by analysis to rank in the zone of desired effects.

10. Scholarship granting organizations shall not provide educational scholarships for students to attend any school or children to receive services from any qualified service provider with paid staff or board members who are relatives within the first degree of consanguinity or affinity.

11. A scholarship granting organization shall publicly report to the department, by June first of each year, the following information prepared by a certified public accountant regarding its grants in the previous calendar year:

(1) The name and address of the scholarship granting organization;

(2) The total number and total dollar amount of contributions received during the previous calendar year; and

(3) The total number and total dollar amount of educational scholarships awarded during the previous calendar year, including the category of each scholarship, and the total number and total dollar amount of educational scholarships awarded during the previous year to students eligible for free and reduced lunch.

12. The department shall adopt rules and regulations consistent with this section as necessary to implement the program.

196 13. The department shall provide a standardized format for a receipt to be issued by a
197 scholarship granting organization to a donor to indicate the value of a contribution received.

198 14. The department shall provide a standardized format for scholarship granting
199 organizations to report the information in this section.

200 15. The department may conduct either a financial review or audit of a scholarship
201 granting organization.

202 16. If the department believes that a scholarship granting organization has intentionally
203 and substantially failed to comply with the requirements of this section, the department may hold
204 a hearing before the director or the director's designee to bar a scholarship granting organization
205 from participating in the program. The director or the director's designee shall issue a decision
206 within thirty days. A scholarship granting organization may appeal the director's decision to the
207 administrative hearing commission for a hearing in accordance with the provisions of chapter
208 621.

209 17. If the scholarship granting organization is barred from participating in the program,
210 the department shall notify affected scholarship students or children and their parents of this
211 decision within fifteen days.

212 18. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in section 536.010, that is
213 created under the authority delegated in this section shall become effective only if it complies
214 with and is subject to all of the provisions of chapter 536 and, if applicable, section 536.028.
215 This section and chapter 536 are nonseverable and if any of the powers vested with the general
216 assembly pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to delay the effective date, or to disapprove and
217 annul a rule are subsequently held unconstitutional, then the grant of rulemaking authority and
218 any rule proposed or adopted after August 28, 2013, shall be invalid and void.

219 19. The department shall conduct a study of the program with funds other than state
220 funds. The department may contract with one or more qualified researchers who have previous
221 experience evaluating similar programs. The department may accept grants to assist in funding
222 this study.

223 20. The study shall assess:

224 (1) The level of participating students' and children's satisfaction with the program in a
225 manner suitable to the student or child;

226 (2) The level of parental satisfaction with the program;

227 (3) The percentage of participating students who were bullied or harassed because of
228 their special needs status at their resident school district compared to the percentage so bullied
229 or harassed at their qualified school;

230 (4) The percentage of participating students who exhibited behavioral problems at their
231 resident school district compared to the percentage exhibiting behavioral problems at their
232 qualified school;

233 (5) The class size experienced by participating students at their resident school district
234 and at their qualified school; and

235 (6) The fiscal impact to the state and resident school districts of the program.

236 21. The study shall be completed using appropriate analytical and behavioral sciences
237 methodologies to ensure public confidence in the study.

238 22. The department shall provide the general assembly with a final copy of the
239 evaluation of the program by December 31, 2016.

240 23. The public and nonpublic participating schools and service providers from which
241 students transfer to participate in the program shall cooperate with the research effort by
242 providing student or child assessment instrument scores and any other data necessary to complete
243 this study.

244 24. The general assembly may require periodic updates on the status of the study from
245 the department. The individuals completing the study shall make their data and methodology
246 available for public review while complying with the requirements of the Family Educational
247 Rights and Privacy Act, as amended.

248 25. Under section 23.253 of the Missouri sunset act:

249 (1) The provisions of the new program authorized under this section shall sunset
250 automatically on December 31, 2019, unless reauthorized by an act of the general assembly; and

251 (2) If such program is reauthorized, the program authorized under this section shall
252 sunset automatically on December 31, 2031; and

253 (3) This section shall terminate on December thirty-first of the calendar year immediately
254 following the calendar year in which the program authorized under this section is sunset.

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