

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 1844

97TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE THOMSON.

4874L.011

D. ADAM CRUMBLISS, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To repeal sections 160.545, 173.1104, and 173.1105, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof three new sections relating to student financial assistance.

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

Section A. Sections 160.545, 173.1104, and 173.1105, RSMo, are repealed and three new sections enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as sections 160.545, 173.1104, and 173.1105, to read as follows: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

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.

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

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 and such other rules and regulations as determined by the commissioner
56 of education, except such waivers shall be confined to the school and not other schools in the
57 school district unless such other schools meet the requirements of this subsection. However, any
58 waiver provided to any school as outlined in this subsection shall be void on June thirtieth of any
59 school year in which the school fails to meet the requirements for the approval of the grants
60 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 vocational or technical school or within the limits established in subsection 9 of this
68 section for any two-year private vocational or technical school for any student:

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

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

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

82 **(4) Who has achieved:**

83 **(a) A score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I end-of-course**
84 **assessment or the equivalent level on a successor assessment or a higher level department**
85 **of elementary and secondary education-approved end-of-course assessment in the field of**
86 **mathematics, unless the student's high school has met all of the department of elementary**
87 **and secondary education's requirements for waiver of the Algebra I end-of-course**
88 **assessment for the recipient; or**

89 (b) A qualifying score, as established annually by the coordinating board for higher
90 education, on the COMPASS exam published by ACT or the mathematics component of
91 the ACT test as a high school or postsecondary student; except that the provisions of this
92 subdivision shall not be required of a student who is enrolling in a certificate program;

93 (5) Who has achieved:

94 (a) A score of proficient or advanced on the official English I end-of-course
95 assessment, or the equivalent level on a successor assessment or a higher level department
96 of elementary and secondary education-approved end-of-course assessment in the field of
97 English, unless the student's high school district has met all of the department of
98 elementary and secondary education's requirements for waiver of the English I end-of-
99 course assessment for the recipient; or

100 (b) A qualifying score, as established annually by the coordinating board for higher
101 education, on the COMPASS exam published by ACT or the English component of the
102 ACT test as a high school or postsecondary student; except that the provisions of this
103 subdivision shall not be required of a student who is enrolling in a certificate program; and

104 (6) For a student who remains continuously enrolled in postsecondary education,
105 the successful completion of at least twenty-four semester credit hours during the twelve
106 months following their initial enrollment and twenty-four semester credit hours during
107 each subsequent twelve-month period.

108 8. If an eligible student is unable to enroll or ceases attendance at an approved
109 institution because of illness, disability, pregnancy, or other medical need or for the
110 purpose of providing service to a nonprofit organization, a state or federal government
111 agency, or any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States, such student shall be
112 eligible for A+ reimbursements upon enrollment in any approved institution if the student
113 meets all other requirements for an initial or renewal award and if the following criteria
114 are met:

115 (1) For an eligible student who cannot attend an approved institution as a result of
116 service to a nonprofit organization or the state or federal government, the student returns
117 to full-time status within twenty-seven months and provides verification to the
118 coordinating board for higher education that the service to the nonprofit organization was
119 satisfactorily completed and was not compensated other than for expenses, or that the
120 service to the state or federal government was satisfactorily completed; or

121 (2) For an eligible student who cannot attend an approved institution as a result of
122 military service in the Armed Forces of the United States, the student returns to full-time
123 status within six months after the eligible student first ceases service to the Armed Forces

124 **and provides verification to the coordinating board for higher education that the military**
125 **service was satisfactorily completed; or**

126 **(3) For an eligible student who cannot attend an approved institution as a result of**
127 **a medical need, the student returns to full-time status within twenty-seven months and**
128 **provides verification in compliance with coordinating board for higher education rules of**
129 **sufficient medical evidence documenting an illness, disability, pregnancy, or other medical**
130 **need of such person to require that the person cannot enroll at an approved institution.**

131 **9.** The commissioner of education shall develop a procedure for evaluating the
132 effectiveness of the program described in this section. Such evaluation shall be conducted
133 annually with the results of the evaluation provided to the governor, speaker of the house, and
134 president pro tempore of the senate.

135 **[9.] 10.** For a two-year private vocational or technical school to obtain reimbursements
136 under subsection 7 of this section, the following requirements shall be satisfied:

137 (1) Such two-year private vocational or technical school shall be a member of the North
138 Central Association and be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission as of July 1, 2008,
139 and maintain such accreditation;

140 (2) Such two-year private vocational or technical school shall be designated as a
141 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;

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

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

173.1104. 1. An applicant shall be eligible for initial or renewed financial assistance
2 only if, at the time of application and throughout the period during which the applicant is
3 receiving such assistance, the applicant:

4 (1) Is a citizen or a permanent resident of the United States;

5 (2) Is a resident of the state of Missouri, as determined by reference to standards
6 promulgated by the coordinating board;

7 (3) Is enrolled, or has been accepted for enrollment, as a full-time undergraduate student
8 in an approved private or public institution; [and]

9 (4) Is not enrolled or does not intend to use the award to enroll in a course of study
10 leading to a degree in theology or divinity;

11 **(5) For an applicant who graduates from high school during the 2016-17 academic**
12 **year or after, has achieved:**

13 **(a) A score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I end-of-course**
14 **assessment, or the equivalent level on a successor assessment or a higher level department**
15 **of elementary and secondary education-approved end-of-course assessment in the field of**
16 **mathematics, unless the student's high school has met all of the department of elementary**
17 **and secondary education's requirements for waiver of the Algebra I end-of-course**
18 **assessment for the recipient; or**

19 **(b) A qualifying score, as established annually by the coordinating board for**
20 **higher education, on the COMPASS exam published by ACT or the mathematics**
21 **component of the ACT test as a high school or postsecondary student; except that the**
22 **provisions of this subdivision shall not be required of a student who is enrolling in a**
23 **certificate program; and**

24 **(6) For an applicant who graduates from high school during the 2016-17 academic**
25 **year or after, has achieved:**

26 **(a) A score of proficient or advanced on the official English I end-of-course**
27 **assessment, or the equivalent level on a successor assessment or a higher level department**
28 **of elementary and secondary education-approved end-of-course assessment in the field of**
29 **English, unless the student's high school has met all of the department of elementary and**
30 **secondary education's requirements for waiver of the English I end-of-course assessment**
31 **for the recipient; or**

32 **(b) A qualifying score, as established annually by the coordinating board for higher**
33 **education, on the COMPASS exam published by ACT or the English component of the**
34 **ACT test as a high school or postsecondary student; except that the provisions of this**
35 **subdivision shall not be required of a student who is enrolling in a certificate program.**

36 2. If an applicant is found guilty of or pleads guilty to any criminal offense during the
37 period of time in which the applicant is receiving financial assistance, such applicant shall not
38 be eligible for renewal of such assistance, provided such offense would disqualify the applicant
39 from receiving federal student aid under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as
40 amended.

41 3. Financial assistance shall be allotted for one academic year, but a recipient shall be
42 eligible for renewed assistance until he or she has obtained a baccalaureate degree, provided such
43 financial assistance shall not exceed a total of ten semesters or fifteen quarters or their
44 equivalent. Standards of eligibility for renewed assistance shall be the same as for an initial
45 award of financial assistance, except that for renewal, an applicant shall demonstrate a
46 grade-point average of two and five-tenths on a four-point scale, or the equivalent on another

47 scale and, beginning with the 2014-15 academic year, has successfully completed the
48 following number of semester credit hours or an equivalent:

- 49 (1) For the first renewal, twenty-four semester hours;
- 50 (2) For the second renewal, forty-eight semester credit hours;
- 51 (3) For the third renewal, seventy-two semester credit hours;
- 52 (4) For the fourth renewal, ninety-six semester credit hours.

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54 This subsection shall be construed as the successor to section 173.215 for purposes of eligibility
55 requirements of other financial assistance programs that refer to section 173.215.

56 **4. If an eligible student is unable to enroll or ceases attendance at an approved**
57 **institution because of illness, disability, pregnancy, or other medical need or for the**
58 **purpose of providing service to a nonprofit organization, a state or federal government**
59 **agency, or any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States, such student shall be**
60 **eligible for an access Missouri award upon enrollment in any approved institution if the**
61 **student meets all other requirements for an initial or renewal award and if the following**
62 **criteria are met:**

63 (1) For an eligible student who cannot attend an approved institution as a result of
64 service to a nonprofit organization or the state or federal government, the student returns
65 to full-time status within twenty-seven months and provides verification to the
66 coordinating board for higher education that the service to the nonprofit organization was
67 satisfactorily completed and was not compensated other than for expenses, or that the
68 service to the state or federal government was satisfactorily completed; or

69 (2) For an eligible student who cannot attend an approved institution as a result of
70 military service in the Armed Forces of the United States, the student returns to full-time
71 status within six months after the eligible student first ceases service to the Armed Forces
72 and provides verification to the coordinating board for higher education that the military
73 service was satisfactorily completed; or

74 (3) For an eligible student who cannot attend an approved institution as a result of
75 a medical need, the student returns to full-time status within twenty-seven months and
76 provides verification in compliance with coordinating board for higher education rules of
77 sufficient medical evidence documenting an illness, disability, pregnancy, or other medical
78 need of such person to require that the person cannot enroll at an approved institution.

173.1105. 1. An applicant who is an undergraduate postsecondary student at an
2 approved private or public institution and who meets the other eligibility criteria shall be eligible
3 for financial assistance, with a minimum and maximum award amount as follows:

- 4 (1) For academic years 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14:

5 (a) One thousand dollars maximum and three hundred dollars minimum for students
6 attending institutions classified as part of the public two-year sector;

7 (b) Two thousand one hundred fifty dollars maximum and one thousand dollars
8 minimum for students attending institutions classified as part of the public four-year sector,
9 including State Technical College of Missouri; and

10 (c) Four thousand six hundred dollars maximum and two thousand dollars minimum for
11 students attending approved private institutions;

12 (2) For the 2014-15 academic year and subsequent years:

13 (a) One thousand three hundred dollars maximum and three hundred dollars minimum
14 for students attending institutions classified as part of the public two-year sector; and

15 (b) Two thousand eight hundred fifty dollars maximum and one thousand five hundred
16 dollars minimum for students attending institutions classified as part of the public four-year
17 sector, including State Technical College of Missouri, or approved private institutions;

18 (c) **The award amount of any student who has completed a minimum of thirty**
19 **semester hours or their equivalent in the previous academic year may be increased by ten**
20 **percent from the base amount in the subsequent academic year.**

21 2. All students with an expected family contribution of twelve thousand dollars or less
22 shall receive at least the minimum award amount for his or her institution. Maximum award
23 amounts for an eligible student with an expected family contribution above seven thousand
24 dollars shall be reduced by ten percent of the maximum expected family contribution for his or
25 her increment group. Any award amount shall be reduced by the amount of a student's payment
26 from the A+ schools program or any successor program to it. For purposes of this subsection,
27 the term "increment group" shall mean a group organized by expected family contribution in five
28 hundred dollar increments into which all eligible students shall be placed.

29 3. If appropriated funds are insufficient to fund the program as described, the maximum
30 award shall be reduced across all sectors by the percentage of the shortfall. If appropriated funds
31 exceed the amount necessary to fund the program, the additional funds shall be used to increase
32 the number of recipients by raising the cutoff for the expected family contribution rather than by
33 increasing the size of the award.

34 4. Every three years, beginning with academic year 2009-10, the award amount may be
35 adjusted to increase no more than the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U),
36 1982-1984 = 100, not seasonally adjusted, as defined and officially recorded by the United States
37 Department of Labor, or its successor agency, for the previous academic year. The coordinating
38 board shall prepare a report prior to the legislative session for use of the general assembly and
39 the governor in determining budget requests which shall include the amount of funds necessary
40 to maintain full funding of the program based on the baseline established for the program upon

41 the effective date of sections 173.1101 to 173.1107. Any increase in the award amount shall not
42 become effective unless an increase in the amount of money appropriated to the program
43 necessary to cover the increase in award amount is passed by the general assembly.

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