

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 599

99TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE HANSEN.

1201H.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 higher education financial aid eligibility, with an emergency clause.

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Section A. Section 160.545, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 160.545, to read as follows: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

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. Any nonpublic school in this state may apply to the state board of education for
35 certification that it meets the requirements of this section subject to the same criteria as public
36 high schools. Every nonpublic school that applies and has met the requirements of this section
37 shall have its students eligible for reimbursement of postsecondary education under subsection
38 8 of this section on an equal basis to students who graduate from public schools that meet the
39 requirements of this section. Any nonpublic school that applies shall not be eligible for any
40 grants under this section. Students of certified nonpublic schools shall be eligible for
41 reimbursement of postsecondary education under subsection 8 of this section so long as they
42 meet the other requirements of such subsection. For purposes of subdivision (5) of subsection
43 2 of this section, the nonpublic school shall be included in the partnership plan developed by the
44 public school district in which the nonpublic school is located. For purposes of subdivision (1)
45 of subsection 2 of this section, the nonpublic school shall establish measurable performance
46 standards for the goals of the program for every school and grade level over which the nonpublic
47 school maintains control.

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

50 5. By rule and regulation, the state board of education may determine a local school
51 district variable fund match requirement in order for a school or schools in the district to receive
52 a grant under the program. However, no school in any district shall receive a grant under the

53 program unless the district designates a salaried employee to serve as the program coordinator,
54 with the district assuming a minimum of one-half the cost of the salary and other benefits
55 provided to the coordinator. Further, no school in any district shall receive a grant under the
56 program unless the district makes available facilities and services for adult literacy training as
57 specified by rule of the state board of education.

58 6. For any school that meets the requirements for the approval of the grants authorized
59 by this section and specified in subsection 2 of this section for three successive school years, by
60 August first following the third such school year, the commissioner of education shall present
61 a plan to the superintendent of the school district in which such school is located for the waiver
62 of rules and regulations to promote flexibility in the operations of the school and to enhance and
63 encourage efficiency in the delivery of instructional services in the school. The provisions of
64 other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the plan presented to the superintendent shall provide
65 a summary waiver, with no conditions, for the pupil testing requirements pursuant to section
66 160.257 in the school. Further, the provisions of other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the
67 plan shall detail a means for the waiver of requirements otherwise imposed on the school related
68 to the authority of the state board of education to classify school districts pursuant to subdivision
69 (9) of section 161.092 and such other rules and regulations as determined by the commissioner
70 of education, except such waivers shall be confined to the school and not other schools in the
71 school district unless such other schools meet the requirements of this subsection. However, any
72 waiver provided to any school as outlined in this subsection shall be void on June thirtieth of any
73 school year in which the school fails to meet the requirements for the approval of the grants
74 authorized by this section as specified in subsection 2 of this section.

75 7. For any school year, grants authorized by subsections 1, 2, and 5 of this section shall
76 be funded with the amount appropriated for this program, less those funds necessary to reimburse
77 eligible students pursuant to subsection 8 of this section.

78 8. The department of higher education shall, by rule, establish a procedure for the
79 reimbursement of the cost of tuition, books and fees to any public community college or
80 vocational or technical school or within the limits established in subsection 10 of this section for
81 any two-year private vocational or technical school for any student:

82 (1) Who has attended a high school in the state for at least three years ~~[immediately]~~
83 prior to graduation that meets the requirements of subsection 2 of this section **and who has**
84 **graduated from such a school**; except that, students who are active duty military dependents,
85 and students who are dependants of retired military who relocate to Missouri within one year of
86 the date of the parent's retirement from active duty, who, in the school year immediately
87 preceding graduation, meet all other requirements of this subsection and are attending a school

88 that meets the requirements of subsection 2 of this section shall be exempt from the three-year
89 attendance requirement of this subdivision; and

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

92 (3) Who has earned a minimal grade average while in high school as determined by rule
93 of the department of higher education, and other requirements for the reimbursement authorized
94 by this subsection as determined by rule and regulation of the department; and

95 (4) Who is a citizen or permanent resident of the United States.

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

100 10. For a two-year private vocational or technical school to obtain reimbursements under
101 subsection 8 of this section, the following requirements shall be satisfied:

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

105 (2) Such two-year private vocational or technical school shall be designated as a
106 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;

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

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

Section B. Because of the importance of providing financial aid for Missouri high school
2 graduates, this act is deemed necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health,
3 welfare, peace, and safety, and is hereby declared to be an emergency act within the meaning of
4 the constitution, and this act shall be in full force and effect upon its passage and approval.

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