

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 341

93RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES SCHNEIDER (Sponsor), HUBBARD,
JOHNSON (47) AND CUNNINGHAM (86) (Co-sponsors).

Read 1st time January 26, 2005 and copies ordered printed.

STEPHEN S. DAVIS, Chief Clerk

1203L.011

AN ACT

To repeal section 160.545, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to A+ school reimbursements.

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Section A. Section 160.545, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 160.545, to read as follows: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

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 course of studies which will qualify a student for graduation from the school; and

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

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

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

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

62 6. **Within the limits established in subsection 8 of this section**, the commissioner of
63 education shall, by rule and regulation of the state board of education and with the advice of the
64 coordinating board for higher education, establish a procedure for the reimbursement of the cost
65 of tuition, books and fees to any public community college or vocational or technical school, **or**
66 **any private vocational or technical school**, for any student:

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

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

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

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

82 8. **The following requirements must be satisfied in order for private vocational or**
83 **technical schools to obtain reimbursements under subsection 6 of this section:**

84 (1) **Such institutions must be members of the north central association and be**
85 **accredited by the higher learning commission;**

86 (2) **Such institutions must be designated as 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations**
87 **under the Internal Revenue Code;**

88 **(3) No private vocational or technical school shall receive tuition reimbursements**
89 **in excess of the tuition rate charged by a public community college for course work offered**
90 **by the private vocational or technical school within the service area of that community**
91 **college; and**

92 **(4) The reimbursements provided to private vocational or technical schools shall**
93 **not violate the provisions of article IX, section 8, or article I, section 7, of the Missouri**
94 **constitution or the first amendment of the United States constitution.**