

HB 903 -- Missouri Promise Program

Sponsor: Kingery

This bill establishes the Missouri Promise Program as a successor to the A+ Schools Program and expands the number of students eligible for scholarships beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year. The program awards scholarships for tuition and fees to students who complete high school in Missouri; make a good faith effort to secure federal and state nonrepayable financial assistance; have at least a 2.5 grade point average in high school; and enroll as a full-time student at a community college or vocational technical school, including certain private vocational or technical schools as defined in the bill. These students must maintain full-time enrollment and a 2.5 grade point average to retain the scholarship. This portion is considered as the successor to the A+ program.

Beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year, the program also provides scholarships for full-time enrollment in public four-year institutions to students who have completed certain associate degrees under the A+ program or the promise program. The scholarship amount will be the lesser of the actual tuition or the average tuition as defined in the bill. The amount of this scholarship may be reduced if a student receives a federal Pell grant or an Access Missouri Award. Applicants must apply for federal and state nonrefundable aid. The required grade point average for this scholarship will be 3.0 with a one-semester grace period.

If appropriated funds are not sufficient for all eligible students, priority will go to the part of the program considered the successor to the A+ program. If those funds are insufficient, scholarship amounts will be reduced equally for all students. The Commissioner of Higher Education must develop a procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of the program and submit the results biannually to the Governor, President Pro Tem of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives.