

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 1701

97TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES ELLINGTON (Sponsor), MIMS,
GARDNER AND SMITH (Co-sponsors).

4518L.02I

D. ADAM CRUMBLISS, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To repeal section 160.545, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to the A+ schools program.

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Section A. Section 160.545, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 160.545, to read as follows: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. 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,
58 any waiver provided to any school as outlined in this subsection shall be void on June thirtieth
59 of any school year in which the school fails to meet the requirements for the approval of the
60 grants 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 8. **(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection 7 of this section, the**
83 **commissioner of education shall establish a process, with the advice of the commissioner**
84 **of higher education, by which any student enrolled in a public high school in a district that**
85 **has been declared unaccredited by the state board of education, who otherwise qualifies**
86 **for reimbursement under subsection 7 of this section but whose high school does not**
87 **qualify under subsection 2 of this section, may apply for and receive reimbursement under**
88 **this section.**

89 **(2) The commissioner of education shall designate school officers, such as but not**
90 **limited to guidance counselors, who shall be authorized to validate a student's eligibility**
91 **under this subsection.**

92 **(3) The commissioner of education shall monitor the accuracy of eligibility**
93 **validation under this section and may, if ineligible students beyond a reasonable margin**
94 **of error are validated, revoke an individual's authority to validate eligibility and may**
95 **further require the school district to repay reimbursements made for ineligible students.**

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 **[9.] 10.** For a two-year private vocational or technical school to obtain reimbursements
101 under [subsection 7] **subsections 7 and 8** of this section, the following requirements shall be
102 satisfied:

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

106 (2) Such two-year private vocational or technical school shall be designated as a
107 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;

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

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

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