

HB 1844 -- STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

SPONSOR: Thomson

This bill changes the laws regarding student financial assistance by revising the provisions regarding the A+ Schools Program and the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program to require:

(1) An applicant to achieve a score of proficient or advanced on the official Algebra I end-of-course assessment or the equivalent on a successor assessment or a higher level of mathematics end-of-course assessment approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education unless the student's high school has met all of the department's requirements for waiver of the assessment for the recipient or to achieve a qualifying score as established each year by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education within the Department of Higher Education on the COMPASS exam published by ACT or the mathematics component of the ACT test except for a student who is enrolling in a certificate program; and

(2) An applicant to achieve a score of proficient or advanced on the official English I end-of-course assessment or the equivalent level on a successor assessment or a higher level of English end-of-course assessment approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education unless the student's high school district has met all of the department's requirements for waiver of the assessment for the recipient or a qualifying score as established each year by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education within the Department of Higher Education on the COMPASS exam published by ACT or the English component of the ACT test except for a student who is enrolling in a certificate program.

These provisions of the bill regarding the A+ Schools Program will apply to any applicant who graduates from high school and the provisions regarding the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program will apply to an applicant who graduates from high school during the 2016-17 year or after.

Beginning with the 2014-15 academic year an applicant for assistance under the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program must successfully complete 24 semester hours each year in order to be eligible for renewed assistance.

The bill allows an eligible student who is unable to enroll or has stopped attending an approved institution because of illness or other medical need or to provide service to a nonprofit organization, government agency, or any branch of the United States Armed Forces to be eligible for reimbursements under either of the programs upon enrollment in any approved institution within the

time periods specified in the bill if he or she meets all other requirements for an initial or renewal award.

For the 2014-15 academic year and for any subsequent year, the award amount under the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program for any student who has completed a minimum of 30 semester hours or their equivalent in the previous academic year may be increased by 10% from the base amount in the subsequent academic year.