

HB 1320 -- YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

SPONSOR: Curtis

This bill establishes three different programs or pilot programs to benefit youth, including the 8 in 6 education pilot program, the community children's services fund regional youth initiative, and the Missouri promise zone initiative.

8 in 6 EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM

The bill establishes the 8 in 6 pilot program within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, compressing seventh and eighth grade, four years of high school, and the first two years of college or professional technical training into six years by allowing a student to take a full course load along with one or two on-line programs during the summer. Students who take the program will graduate from high school with an associates degree. The department will pay a portion of the cost of summer on-line courses from funds appropriated for the program. The 8 in 6 Program Fund is created that must, upon appropriation, be used solely for the administration of the program.

A participating student must sign an agreement with his or her parent stating that the student will complete dual credit or professional-technical education courses for part of the student's eleventh and twelfth grade years in which funding will not be provided. The student will also complete at least one summer on-line course for which the state will pay \$225 per one credit summer on-line course, along with at least 14 credits per school year. The state will not pay for more than a combined total of eight credits of summer on-line courses.

No more than 25% of the students in each grade seven through 12 may participate in the program on a grade-by-grade basis. Participation slots not being used must be reallocated to those grades in which more than 25% of the students have applied. Students will remain in the program until they sign a withdrawal form or have graduated. If the amount of applicants exceeds the number of participation slots, participation preference criteria will be created by the school district.

Courses eligible for the program must be offered by an accredited institution. Dual credit, dual enrollment, and advanced placement courses are not eligible.

The provisions of the 8 in 6 program will expire six years after the effective date.

COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES FUND REGIONAL YOUTH INITIATIVE

The bill authorizes any city or county that has imposed a tax and established a community children's services fund to establish a regional youth initiative and to use revenues from the fund to:

- (1) Identify local children and youth who demonstrate a commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity developmental skills or assets, school completion and success, and risk prevention;
- (2) Assist and support such local children and youth in their efforts to be academically and vocationally productive, socially and civically connected, and healthy and safe by encouraging participation in programs promoting healthy development, learning skills for today's and tomorrow's jobs, and being connected to the community, thereby assisting such local children and youth in their preparation to succeed; and
- (3) Identify existing programs or develop and provide programs described above to accomplish these purposes.

MISSOURI PROMISE ZONE INITIATIVE

The bill establishes the Missouri promise zone initiative, which requires the Department of Economic Development to designate promise zones and to develop a coordinated improvement plan with all state departments to ensure that they will seek to revitalize high-poverty communities within the promise zones by creating jobs, increasing economic activity, improving educational opportunities, reducing serious and violent crime, leveraging private capital, and assisting local leaders in navigating state programs by partnering with local leaders who are addressing multiple community revitalization challenges in a collaborative way and have demonstrated a commitment to results, with a particular emphasis on health and wellness, economic development, youth services, and community pride.

The requirements to qualify as a promise zone and the membership on each promise zone's board are detailed in the bill. The promise zone designation will be for a term of 10 years and may be extended as necessary to capture the full term of availability of any promise zone tax incentives enacted by the General Assembly. The department must annually prepare and file a report with the General Assembly that tracks the progress of the Missouri promise zone initiative and that identifies areas of and plans for improvement.