

HB 1498 -- COMMUNITY SCHOOLS GRANT PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Walton Gray

This bill establishes a grant program to fund community schools in the St. Louis City, St. Louis County, Kansas City, and Jackson County school districts. A community school makes its facilities available to the public, identifies community needs and resources, and initiates programs to improve the cultural, social, recreational, and educational opportunities in the community. A community education program uses public buildings as community centers operated by the district in cooperation with other groups, organizations, and governmental agencies.

The State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must develop a state plan for community education that sets forth the goals and objectives of the program and establishes a system of priorities for targeting available resources on the areas with the greatest need within a district. The department must administer a grant program to employ a full-time community education director in each of the school districts to plan and manage programs and services for community education that are targeted to the greatest educational needs in the community and to encourage cooperation among all schools in the district and to provide him or her with professional development training. To receive a grant, the school district must apply as prescribed by the department, submit a plan describing its program that has been approved by its local board, establish a council to assist with needs assessment and program priorities, and employ a full-time community education director. A grantee must file a program evaluation and financial statement annually with the department.

The bill establishes the Council for Community Education made up of 15 members appointed by the Governor. The Commissioner of Education within the department or his or her designee must convene the council's organizational meeting. The council may meet up to four times a year.

The provisions of the bill will expire six years after the effective date of the bill.

This bill is similar to HB 87 (2015).