

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

# HOUSE BILL NO. 2693

98TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE BARNES.

6782H.011

D. ADAM CRUMBLISS, Chief Clerk

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## AN ACT

To repeal section 160.545, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to reimbursement of higher education costs for certain students who attended certified nonpublic high schools.

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*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Section A. Section 160.545, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 160.545, to read as follows: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. Any nonpublic school in this state may apply to the state board of education for**  
35 **certification that it meets the requirements of this section subject to the same criteria as**  
36 **public high schools. Any nonpublic school that applies shall not be eligible for any grants**  
37 **under this section. However, students of certified nonpublic schools shall be eligible for**  
38 **reimbursement of postsecondary education under subsection 8 of this section so long as**  
39 **they meet the other requirements of such subsection.**

40 **4.** A school district may participate in the program irrespective of its accreditation  
41 classification by the state board of education, provided it meets all other requirements.

42 [4.] **5.** By rule and regulation, the state board of education may determine a local school  
43 district variable fund match requirement in order for a school or schools in the district to receive  
44 a grant under the program. However, no school in any district shall receive a grant under the  
45 program unless the district designates a salaried employee to serve as the program coordinator,  
46 with the district assuming a minimum of one-half the cost of the salary and other benefits  
47 provided to the coordinator. Further, no school in any district shall receive a grant under the  
48 program unless the district makes available facilities and services for adult literacy training as  
49 specified by rule of the state board of education.

50 [5.] **6.** For any school that meets the requirements for the approval of the grants  
51 authorized by this section and specified in subsection 2 of this section for three successive school  
52 years, by August first following the third such school year, the commissioner of education shall

53 present a plan to the superintendent of the school district in which such school is located for the  
54 waiver of rules and regulations to promote flexibility in the operations of the school and to  
55 enhance and encourage efficiency in the delivery of instructional services in the school. The  
56 provisions of other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the plan presented to the superintendent  
57 shall provide a summary waiver, with no conditions, for the pupil testing requirements pursuant  
58 to section 160.257 in the school. Further, the provisions of other law to the contrary  
59 notwithstanding, the plan shall detail a means for the waiver of requirements otherwise imposed  
60 on the school related to the authority of the state board of education to classify school districts  
61 pursuant to subdivision (9) of section 161.092 and such other rules and regulations as determined  
62 by the commissioner of education, except such waivers shall be confined to the school and not  
63 other schools in the school district unless such other schools meet the requirements of this  
64 subsection. However, any waiver provided to any school as outlined in this subsection shall be  
65 void on June thirtieth of any school year in which the school fails to meet the requirements for  
66 the approval of the grants authorized by this section as specified in subsection 2 of this section.

67 [6.] 7. For any school year, grants authorized by subsections 1, 2, and [4] 5 of this section  
68 shall be funded with the amount appropriated for this program, less those funds necessary to  
69 reimburse eligible students pursuant to subsection [7] 8 of this section.

70 [7.] 8. The department of higher education shall, by rule, establish a procedure for the  
71 reimbursement of the cost of tuition, books and fees to any public community college or  
72 vocational or technical school or within the limits established in subsection [9] 10 of this section  
73 for any two-year private vocational or technical school for any student:

74 (1) Who has attended a [public] high school in the state for at least three years  
75 immediately prior to graduation that meets the requirements of subsection 2 of this section;  
76 except that, students who are active duty military dependents, and students who are dependants  
77 of retired military who relocate to Missouri within one year of the date of the parent's retirement  
78 from active duty, who, in the school year immediately preceding graduation, meet all other  
79 requirements of this subsection and are attending a school that meets the requirements of  
80 subsection 2 of this section shall be exempt from the three-year attendance requirement of this  
81 subdivision; and

82 (2) Who has made a good faith effort to first secure all available federal sources of  
83 funding that could be applied to the reimbursement described in this subsection; and

84 (3) Who has earned a minimal grade average while in high school as determined by rule  
85 of the department of higher education, and other requirements for the reimbursement authorized  
86 by this subsection as determined by rule and regulation of the department; and

87 (4) Who is a citizen or permanent resident of the United States.

88 [8.] 9. The commissioner of education shall develop a procedure for evaluating the  
89 effectiveness of the program described in this section. Such evaluation shall be conducted  
90 annually with the results of the evaluation provided to the governor, speaker of the house, and  
91 president pro tempore of the senate.

92 [9.] 10. For a two-year private vocational or technical school to obtain reimbursements  
93 under subsection [7] 8 of this section, the following requirements shall be satisfied:

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

97 (2) Such two-year private vocational or technical school shall be designated as a  
98 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;

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

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

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