

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

# HOUSE BILL NO. 1141

## 101ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE BUCHHEIT-COURTWAY.

2440H.011

DANA RADEMAN MILLER, 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 A+ schools, with an emergency clause.

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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Section A. Section 160.545, RSMo, is repealed and one new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 160.545, to read as follows: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:

(a) Earn credits toward any type of college degree while in high school; or

(b) 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

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.

16 (2) Specify the knowledge, skills and competencies, in measurable terms, that students  
17 must demonstrate to successfully complete any individual course offered by the school, and any  
18 course of studies [~~which~~] **that** will qualify a student for graduation from the school; and

19 (3) Do not offer a general track of courses that, upon completion, can lead to a high  
20 school diploma; and

21 (4) Require rigorous coursework with standards of competency in basic academic  
22 subjects for students pursuing vocational and technical education as prescribed by rule and  
23 regulation of the state board of education; and

24 (5) Have a partnership plan developed in cooperation and with the advice of local  
25 business persons, labor leaders, parents, and representatives of college and postsecondary  
26 vocational and technical school representatives, with the plan then approved by the local board  
27 of education. The plan shall specify a mechanism to receive information on an annual basis from  
28 those who developed the plan in addition to senior citizens, community leaders, and teachers to  
29 update the plan in order to best meet the goals of the program as provided in subsection 1 of this  
30 section. Further, the plan shall detail the procedures used in the school to identify students that  
31 may drop out of school and the intervention services to be used to meet the needs of such  
32 students. The plan shall outline counseling and mentoring services provided to students who will  
33 enter the work force upon graduation from high school, address apprenticeship and intern  
34 programs, and shall contain procedures for the recruitment of volunteers from the community  
35 of the school to serve in schools receiving program grants.

36 3. Any nonpublic school in this state may apply to the state board of education for  
37 certification that it meets the requirements of this section subject to the same criteria as public  
38 high schools. Every nonpublic school that applies and has met the requirements of this section  
39 shall have its students eligible for reimbursement of postsecondary education under subsection  
40 8 of this section on an equal basis to students who graduate from public schools that meet the  
41 requirements of this section. Any nonpublic school that applies shall not be eligible for any  
42 grants under this section. Students of certified nonpublic schools shall be eligible for  
43 reimbursement of postsecondary education under subsection 8 of this section so long as they  
44 meet the other requirements of such subsection. For purposes of subdivision (5) of subsection  
45 2 of this section, the nonpublic school shall be included in the partnership plan developed by the  
46 public school district in which the nonpublic school is located. For purposes of subdivision (1)  
47 of subsection 2 of this section, the nonpublic school shall establish measurable performance  
48 standards for the goals of the program for every school and grade level over which the nonpublic  
49 school maintains control.

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

52           5. By rule and regulation, the state board of education may determine a local school  
53 district variable fund match requirement in order for a school or schools in the district to receive  
54 a grant under the program. However, no school in any district shall receive a grant under the  
55 program unless the district designates a salaried employee to serve as the program coordinator,  
56 with the district assuming a minimum of one-half the cost of the salary and other benefits  
57 provided to the coordinator. Further, no school in any district shall receive a grant under the  
58 program unless the district makes available facilities and services for adult literacy training as  
59 specified by rule of the state board of education.

60           6. For any school that meets the requirements for the approval of the grants authorized  
61 by this section and specified in subsection 2 of this section for three successive school years, by  
62 August first following the third such school year, the commissioner of education shall present  
63 a plan to the superintendent of the school district in which such school is located for the waiver  
64 of rules and regulations to promote flexibility in the operations of the school and to enhance and  
65 encourage efficiency in the delivery of instructional services in the school. The provisions of  
66 other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the plan presented to the superintendent shall provide  
67 a summary waiver, with no conditions, for the pupil testing requirements pursuant to section  
68 160.257 in the school. Further, the provisions of other law to the contrary notwithstanding, the  
69 plan shall detail a means for the waiver of requirements otherwise imposed on the school related  
70 to the authority of the state board of education to classify school districts pursuant to subdivision  
71 (9) of section 161.092 and such other rules and regulations as determined by the commissioner  
72 of education, except such waivers shall be confined to the school and not other schools in the  
73 school district unless such other schools meet the requirements of this subsection. However, any  
74 waiver provided to any school as outlined in this subsection shall be void on June thirtieth of any  
75 school year in which the school fails to meet the requirements for the approval of the grants  
76 authorized by this section as specified in subsection 2 of this section.

77           7. For any school year, grants authorized by subsections 1, 2, and 5 of this section shall  
78 be funded with the amount appropriated for this program, less those funds necessary to reimburse  
79 eligible students pursuant to subsection 8 or 9 of this section.

80           8. The department of higher education and workforce development shall, by rule,  
81 establish a procedure for the reimbursement of the cost of tuition, books and fees to any public  
82 community college or vocational or technical school or within the limits established in  
83 subsection 11 of this section for any two-year private vocational or technical school for any  
84 student:

85           (1) Who has attended a high school in the state for at least two years that meets the  
86 requirements of subsection 2 of this section and who has graduated from such a school; except  
87 that, students who are active duty military dependents, and students who are dependents of

88 retired military who relocate to Missouri within one year of the date of the parent's retirement  
89 from active duty who meet all other requirements of this subsection and are attending a school  
90 that meets the requirements of subsection 2 of this section shall be exempt from the two-year  
91 attendance requirement of this subdivision; and

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

94 (3) Who has earned a minimal grade average while in high school or through the  
95 semester immediately before taking the course for which reimbursement is sought as determined  
96 by rule of the department of higher education and workforce development, and other  
97 requirements for the reimbursement authorized by this subsection as determined by rule and  
98 regulation of the department. **When determining whether a student has earned a minimal  
99 grade average in the 2019-20 or 2020-21 school years for purposes of this subdivision, the  
100 department shall apply the student's highest available high school grade average so that  
101 the student is not adversely affected by any negative change in the student's academic  
102 performance directly caused by the coronavirus named SARS-CoV-2, the international  
103 outbreak of respiratory disease named "coronavirus disease 2019" and abbreviated as  
104 "COVID-19", or any changes in methods of instruction implemented by the student's  
105 school district because of COVID-19; and**

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

107 9. The department of higher education and workforce development shall, by rule,  
108 establish a procedure for the reimbursement of the cost of tuition, and fees for any dual-credit  
109 or dual-enrollment course offered to a student in high school in association with an institution  
110 of higher education or vocational or technical school, subject to the requirements of subsection  
111 11 of this section, for any student who meets the requirements established in subsection 8 of this  
112 section immediately before taking the course for which reimbursement is sought.

113 10. The commissioner of education shall develop a procedure for evaluating the  
114 effectiveness of the program described in this section. Such evaluation shall be conducted  
115 annually with the results of the evaluation provided to the governor, speaker of the house, and  
116 president pro tempore of the senate.

117 11. For a two-year private vocational or technical school to obtain reimbursements under  
118 subsection 8 or 9 of this section, the following requirements shall be satisfied:

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

122 (2) Such two-year private vocational or technical school shall be designated as a  
123 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;

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

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

131 12. The department of higher education and workforce development shall distribute  
132 reimbursements in the following manner:

133 (1) To community college or vocational or technical school students;

134 (2) After all students from subdivision (1) of this subsection have been reimbursed, to  
135 any dual-credit or dual-enrollment student on the basis of financial need.

Section B. Because immediate action is necessary to protect students from adverse  
2 impacts to student success in educational and career endeavors caused by COVID-19 and related  
3 disruptions in school routines, section A of this act is deemed necessary for the immediate  
4 preservation of the public health, welfare, peace, and safety, and is hereby declared to be an  
5 emergency act within the meaning of the constitution, and section A of this act shall be in full  
6 force and effect upon its passage and approval.

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