

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
93rd General Assembly
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As Engrossed: S3/4/21 H4/5/21
A Bill

SENATE BILL 291

By: Senator Irvin
By: Representative L. Johnson

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO SUPPORT ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL APPROACH; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO SUPPORT ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL APPROACH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 15, is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 30 – Community Schools Act

6-15-3001. Title.

This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Community Schools Act".

6-15-3002. Definitions.

As used in this subchapter:

(1)(A) "Community school" means a public school that implements a service and inclusion strategy that coordinates resources and relationships in order to accelerate equitable outcomes.

(B) Community school strategies may vary among public



schools based on the needs of individual communities, but at a minimum include the following without limitation:

(i) The four (4) key pillars of an evidence-based community school approach, which include:

(a) Integrated student supports;

(b) Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities;

(c) Active family and community engagement;

and

(d) Collaborative leadership and practices

that:

(1) Promote conditions found in high-quality schools; and

(2) Address out-of-school barriers to learning;

(ii) A community school coordinator at each community school site; and

(iii) A community school plan.

(C) Community school strategies require that public schools obtain consent from parents and legal guardians of public school students for services provided;

(2)(A) "Community school coordinator" means a designated site resource coordinator at a public school or local education agency that provides a variety of resources, including partnerships with community resources, and whose primary responsibilities include:

(i) Leading needs and assets analyses;

(ii) Facilitating development and implementation of a community school plan in collaboration with other members of school-based leadership;

(iii) Building relationships between the school and community partners for the provision of identified supports and services; and

(iv) Connecting public school students and families to available services and opportunities.

(B) To the extent possible, the responsibilities of a community school coordinator may be undertaken in coordination with a parent facilitator appointed under § 6-15-1702; and

(3) "Community school plan" means a plan that establishes how educators, school staff, governmental entities, and community partners will use and leverage all available assets to meet specific student and family needs in order to improve opportunities and outcomes for students.

6-15-3003. Assistance by Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education may:

(1) Provide professional development programs that teach the competencies required for:

(A) Managing successful community schools and expanded learning time;

(B) Planning and implementing services and strategies in collaboration with communities; and

(C) Blending and braiding funding to support community schools;

(2)(A) Require sufficient data to:

(i) Enable oversight of community schools; and

(ii) Inform ongoing school improvement.

(B)(i) Any data required under subdivision (2)(A) of this section shall be protected by all applicable federal and state data privacy laws.

(ii) No additional data mining is permitted under this section; and

(3) Work to position community schools to become hubs for aligned and coordinated programs across state agencies.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2916(2), concerning the authority of the State Board of Education over a public school district classified as in need of Level 5 – Intensive support, is amended to add an additional subdivision to read as follows:

(L) Require a structured system of whole child supports through a community school plan, as defined by § 6-15-3002.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 23, Subchapter 1, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-23-109. Community schools.

(a) The authorizer may designate a public charter school as a community school, as defined by § 6-15-3002.

(b) To be designated as a community school, the applicant shall include in its original application or charter amendment request:

(1) A request to be designated as a community school; and

(2) A community school plan, as defined by § 6-15-3002, which shall include without limitation an initial plan for serving student needs.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-23-201(a)(2)(A), concerning a public school's application for conversion public charter school status, is amended to read as follows:

(A) Adopting research-based school or instructional designs, or both, that focus on improving student and school performance, which may include without limitation the implementation of a community school plan, as defined by § 6-15-3002;

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-23-302(c)(2), concerning an application to become an open-enrollment public charter school, is amended to read as follows:

(2) Describe a plan for academic achievement that addresses how the open-enrollment public charter school will improve student learning and meet the state education goals, which may include without limitation the implementation of a community school plan, as defined by § 6-15-3002;

SECTION 6. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in substantial disruption to the educational system in the state's kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) public schools and open-enrollment public charter schools; that amendments to the law as provided in this act are needed to address challenges faced by Arkansas students in succeeding in school and in life; and that this act is immediately necessary to maintain the orderly operation of public schools and open-enrollment public charter schools so that students in this state continue to receive an adequate education. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this act being immediately necessary for the

preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective on:

(1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

(2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor, the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the bill; or

(3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

/s/Irvin