

1 State of Arkansas
2 93rd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2021
4

As Engrossed: S3/4/21 H4/5/21

A Bill

SENATE BILL 291

5 By: Senator Irvin
6 By: Representative L. Johnson
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO SUPPORT ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC
10 SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMUNITY
11 SCHOOL APPROACH; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
12
13

Subtitle

15 TO SUPPORT ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND
16 PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE
17 IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL
18 APPROACH.
19
20

21 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
22

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

25 Subchapter 30 – Community Schools Act
26

27 6-15-3001. Title.

28 This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Community
29 Schools Act".
30

31 6-15-3002. Definitions.

32 As used in this subchapter:

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

36 (B) Community school strategies may vary among public



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

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

5 (a) Integrated student supports;

6 (b) Expanded and enriched learning time and
7 opportunities;

8 (c) Active family and community engagement;

9 and

10 (d) Collaborative leadership and practices

11 that:

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

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

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

18 (iii) A community school plan.

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

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

26 (i) Leading needs and assets analyses;

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

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

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

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

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

5
6 6-15-3003. Assistance by Division of Elementary and Secondary
7 Education.

8 The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education may:

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

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

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

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

17 (2)(A) Require sufficient data to:

18 (i) Enable oversight of community schools; and

19 (ii) Inform ongoing school improvement.

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

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

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

27
28 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2916(2), concerning the authority of
29 the State Board of Education over a public school district classified as in
30 need of Level 5 – Intensive support, is amended to add an additional
31 subdivision to read as follows:

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

34
35 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 23, Subchapter 1, is amended
36 to add an additional section to read as follows:

1 6-23-109. Community schools.

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

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

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

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

9
10 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-23-201(a)(2)(A), concerning a public
11 school's application for conversion public charter school status, is amended
12 to read as follows:

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

17
18 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-23-302(c)(2), concerning an application
19 to become an open-enrollment public charter school, is amended to read as
20 follows:

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

25
26 SECTION 6. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the
27 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-
28 19) pandemic has resulted in substantial disruption to the educational system
29 in the state's kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) public schools and
30 open-enrollment public charter schools; that amendments to the law as
31 provided in this act are needed to address challenges faced by Arkansas
32 students in succeeding in school and in life; and that this act is
33 immediately necessary to maintain the orderly operation of public schools and
34 open-enrollment public charter schools so that students in this state
35 continue to receive an adequate education. Therefore, an emergency is
36 declared to exist, and this act being immediately necessary for the

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

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

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

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

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/s/Irvin