

SENATE BILL 2393

By Dickerson

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,  
Chapter 6, Part 24, relative to community schools.

WHEREAS, all children are capable of success, and good schools prepare all children for full and productive lives; and

WHEREAS, children succeed when adults work together to foster positive educational outcomes, and schools work best when families take active roles in the education of children; and

WHEREAS, community schools represent a place-based school strategy in which schools partner with community agencies and local government to provide an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, community schools provide academic enrichment; opportunities for students to participate in physical fitness activities, fine arts and music programs, and other recreational opportunities; a safe haven for children and teens; and supports for families through extended day opportunities; and

WHEREAS, students attending community schools have the opportunity to be more successful academically, more engaged in their communities, and better prepared to make a successful transition from school to adulthood; now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-2402, is amended by deleting the section and substituting instead the following:

As used in this part:

(1) "Community consortium" means a partnership established between an LEA and one (1) or more community partners for purposes of establishing, operating, and sustaining a community school;

(2) "Community partner" means a provider of one (1) or more community school programs, a community organization, or any entity approved by the local board of education with a desire to improve conditions in the community;

(3) "Community school" means a public elementary, middle, junior high, or senior high school that partners with one (1) or more community partners to coordinate academic, social, and health services to reduce barriers to learning and improve the quality of education for students in the community;

(4) "Community school program" includes, but is not limited to:

(A) Early childhood education;

(B) Before or after-school and summer school academic and enrichment programs;

(C) College and career preparation;

(D) Service-learning opportunities, such as internships and community service programs;

(E) Leadership and mentoring programs;

(F) Activities to encourage community and parent engagement in students' education;

(G) Health and social services for students and students' families;

(H) Programs designed to increase school attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism rates;

(I) Youth and adult job-training services and career-counseling services;

(J) Nutrition-education services;

(K) Parenting classes; and

(L) Adult education, including instruction in English as a second language, adult literacy, computer literacy, financial literacy, and hard-skills training; and

(5) "Deep needs assessment" means an assessment used to identify specific academic, physical, social, emotional, health, mental health, and other wraparound service needs of students, students' families, and members of the school community through surveys, interviews, focus groups, or other engagement methods, and an assessment of the specific programs, community and neighborhood organizations, faith-based organizations, or other community businesses and organizations that might be able to provide support and resources.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-2403, is amended by deleting the section and substituting instead the following:

(a) Local boards of education are authorized and encouraged to collaborate with community partners to establish community schools to provide community programs to students, families, and community members.

(b) Prior to the establishment of a community school, a local board of education shall conduct a deep needs assessment to determine the possible benefits and supports available for a community school. The deep needs assessment shall include substantial input from a majority of the parents and guardians of students attending the prospective community school, employees of the prospective community school, and any relevant community stakeholders.

(c) The local board of education shall develop a community school plan that addresses the specific needs identified in the deep needs assessment. The community school plan shall include:

(1) Academic support and enrichment services, which may include expanded learning time, job training, internship opportunities, and career-counseling services, or assistance programs for students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled;

(2) Programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy, parent leadership development activities, and parenting education activities;

(3) Mechanisms for meeting students' social, emotional, and physical health needs, which may include the coordination of existing services as well as the development of new services based on student needs;

(4) Strategies to create a safe and secure school environment and improve school climate and discipline, such as implementing a system of positive behavioral supports;

(5) Opportunities for community involvement, which may include service and service-learning opportunities, homeless prevention services, and adult education; and

(6) Other programming designed to meet the needs identified in the deep needs assessment.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-2404, is amended by deleting the section and substituting instead the following:

(a) Subject to the availability of funding, the department of education shall establish and administer a transformational community schools grant program to assist schools identified as priority schools or focus schools under § 49-1-602 in implementing a community school program as part of a school turnaround strategy.

(b) In order for a priority or focus school to qualify for a transformational community schools grant, the school's LEA shall submit an application to the department that includes:

(1) Evidence of community need and a description of how a community school will meet that need;

(2) Evidence that the LEA has the capacity to implement the community school plan;

(3) A description of how the community school model fits into the LEA's comprehensive support and improvement plan to improve student outcomes required under § 49-1-602(b)(6);

(4) A plan for implementing:

(A) High-quality teaching and instruction;

(B) A shared leadership philosophy that emphasizes the value of broad stakeholder input and a shared ownership in the outcomes achieved by the priority or focus school on the part of the community;

(C) Curriculum that engages the population served by the priority or focus school, and that is culturally and socially relevant and academically rigorous;

(D) Positive discipline practices, with a goal of improving behavioral outcomes and limiting exclusionary discipline;

(E) Wraparound supports such as physical and mental health services, social services, and academic enrichment programs; and

(F) Plans for ongoing parent and community engagement; and

(5) A plan for establishing at least two (2) of the following types of programs in the priority or focus school:

- (A) Early childhood education;
- (B) Academic support and enrichment services;
- (C) Job training, internship opportunities, or career-counseling services;
- (D) Assistance programs for students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled;
- (E) Programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy;
- (F) Physical and mental healthcare services, which may be offered to students and students' families;
- (G) Mentoring or other youth development programs, including peer mentoring and conflict mediation;
- (H) Juvenile crime prevention or rehabilitation programs;
- (I) Community service or service-learning opportunities;
- (J) Adult education;
- (K) Homeless prevention services; or
- (L) Other programming designed to meet the needs identified in the deep needs assessment.

(c) The commissioner of education may award grants through the transformational community schools grant program to qualifying schools as determined through scoring rubrics and policies developed by the department of education.

(d) Each grantee shall:

- (1) Identify and hire a site-based coordinator to coordinate services at the community school site;
- (2) Conduct the deep needs assessment under § 49-6-2403; and

(3) Establish a community school planning and implementation team responsible for developing school-specific programming goals, assessing program needs, and overseeing the process of expanding programming at the community school.

(e) The community school planning and implementation team shall appoint a chair to guide the team's work. The community school planning and implementation team shall be composed of no less than thirteen (13) members to include at least:

(1) Five (5) parents;

(2) Five (5) school employees to include:

(A) Three (3) teachers;

(B) One (1) educational support professional; and

(C) One (1) specialized support personnel;

(3) The school principal; provided, however, that the principal shall not chair the team;

(4) Community partner representatives; and

(5) Community members.

(f) Duties of a site-based coordinator shall include, at minimum:

(1) Coordination and oversight of the deep needs assessment required under § 49-6-2403;

(2) Engaging community stakeholders in forming partnerships that meet the needs identified in the deep needs assessment;

(3) Integrating and aligning resources from community partners, and tracking all resource activity; and

(4) Preparing for submission, and submitting, all reports required under this part to school leadership, the local board of education, or the department of education.

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-2405, is amended by deleting the section and substituting instead the following:

At the conclusion of each school year for which a priority or focus school has received transformational community schools grant funds, each grantee shall submit a report to the department of education and make the report available on the school and LEA's website. The report shall be generated by the community school planning and implementation team and shall provide, at minimum:

(1) Evidence of meaningful and sustained collaboration between the community school and community stakeholders, including, but not limited to, local governmental units, civic engagement organizations, businesses, faith-based institutions, social service providers, and institutions such as universities, hospitals, museums, nonprofits, businesses, or other community partners to further the development and implementation of community school programming;

(2) Academic, student, and family support programs offered;

(3) Professional development, training, and technical assistance provided to community school employees to assist with implementation of the community school plan;

(4) Data relative to student attendance, discipline, and retention for students enrolled in the community school;

(5) Data relative to student achievement and student growth;

(6) Teacher recruitment or retention strategies and incentives provided by the LEA to attract and retain high quality teachers;

(7) Any improvements in the frequency or depth of parent or family involvement;

(8) Any improvements in the access to services for students and the students' families;

(9) Results of a satisfaction survey administered to parents, students, teachers, community partners, or community stakeholders; and

(10) The ability, or anticipated ability, of the grantee and community partners to continue to provide services in the absence of future funding under this part.

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-2406, is amended by deleting the section and substituting instead the following:

(a) A transformational community schools fund shall be established as a separate account in the state treasury for the purposes of funding transformational community schools grants. Costs of administering the transformational community schools grant program may be funded from the transformational community schools fund.

(b) Transformational community schools grants may be awarded by the department and shall not exceed one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) per school for each fiscal year. Grants are renewable at the discretion of the department. Grant funds shall supplement, not supplant, existing school services and funds.

(c) Funds may be appropriated by the general assembly, but funds may also be placed in the transformational community schools fund from other sources, including federal funds and funds from any person, association, or corporation that voluntarily donates or contributes to the transformational community schools fund.

(d) Amounts remaining in the fund at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund. Moneys in the transformational community schools fund shall be invested by the state treasurer pursuant to title 9, chapter 4, part 6, for the sole benefit of the fund.

(e) Nothing in this part prevents a transformational community schools grant applicant from applying for, or receiving, any additional financial assistance for purposes of advancing the implementation of its community school plan.

SECTION 6. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-2409, is amended by deleting subsection (b).

SECTION 7. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.