

SENATE FILE 386  
BY CONNOLLY

Passed Senate, Date \_\_\_\_\_ Passed House, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Vote: Ayes \_\_\_\_\_ Nays \_\_\_\_\_ Vote: Ayes \_\_\_\_\_ Nays \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved \_\_\_\_\_

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to the establishment of a smaller learning  
2 communities pilot program for school districts and making an  
3 appropriation.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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SF 386  
EDUCATION

1 Section 1. SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES. There is  
2 appropriated from the general fund of the state to the  
3 department of education for the fiscal year beginning July 1,  
4 2001, and ending June 30, 2002, the following amount, or so  
5 much thereof as is necessary, to be used for the purposes  
6 designated:

7 For purposes of smaller learning communities pilot program  
8 grants to school districts for activities related to  
9 establishing smaller learning communities in high schools:

10 ..... \$ 500,000

11 1. Funds allocated for purposes of the smaller learning  
12 communities pilot program shall be used to award grants to  
13 eligible school districts. A school district shall be  
14 eligible for a grant under the program if the school district  
15 submits an application to the department of education, along  
16 with any information required by the department, that  
17 describes the following:

18 a. Strategies and methods the school district will use to  
19 create the smaller learning community or communities in one or  
20 more high schools.

21 b. Curriculum and instructional practices, including any  
22 particular themes or emphases, to be used in the learning  
23 environment.

24 c. The extent of involvement of teachers and other school  
25 personnel in investigating, designing, implementing, and  
26 sustaining the smaller learning community or communities.

27 d. The process to be used for involving students, parents,  
28 and other stakeholders in the development and implementation  
29 of the smaller learning community or communities.

30 e. Any cooperation or collaboration among community  
31 agencies, organizations, businesses, and others to develop or  
32 implement a plan to create the smaller learning community or  
33 communities.

34 f. The training and professional development activities  
35 that will be offered to teachers and others involved in the

1 activities assisted with grant moneys.

2 g. The goals and objectives of the activities assisted  
3 under this section, including a description of how such  
4 activities will better enable all students in the school  
5 district to achieve challenging student performance standards  
6 adopted by the school district.

7 h. The methods by which the school district will assess  
8 progress in meeting its goals and objectives.

9 i. The relationship of a smaller learning community to the  
10 rest of the school, if the smaller learning community exists  
11 as a school-within-a-school, including but not limited to  
12 governance and administration.

13 j. The administrative and managerial relationship between  
14 the school district and the smaller learning community or  
15 communities, including how the school district will  
16 demonstrate a commitment to the continuity of the smaller  
17 learning community or communities, including the continuity of  
18 student and teacher assignment to a particular smaller  
19 learning community.

20 k. How the school district will coordinate or use grant  
21 moneys received pursuant to this subsection with other  
22 private, local, state, or federal assistance.

23 1. Grade levels or ages of students who will participate  
24 in the smaller learning community or communities.

25 m. The method of determining placement of students in the  
26 smaller learning community or communities. Students shall not  
27 be placed according to ability, performance, or any other  
28 measure, but shall instead be placed at random or by their own  
29 choice, not pursuant to testing or other judgments.

30 2. Funds received by a school district to establish a  
31 smaller learning community or communities shall be used to do  
32 the following:

33 a. Study the feasibility of creating a smaller learning  
34 community or communities as well as effective and innovative  
35 organizational and instructional strategies that will be used

1 in the smaller learning community or communities.

2 b. Research, develop, and implement strategies for  
3 creating smaller learning community or communities, as well as  
4 effective and innovative changes in curriculum and  
5 instruction, geared to the school district's comprehensive  
6 school improvement plan as required under section 256.7,  
7 subsection 21.

8 c. Provide professional development for school staff in  
9 innovative teaching methods that challenge and engage students  
10 in the smaller learning community or communities.

11 d. Develop and implement strategies to include parents,  
12 business representatives, local institutions of higher  
13 education, community-based organizations, and other community  
14 members in the smaller learning communities, as facilitators  
15 of activities that enable teachers to participate in  
16 professional development activities, as well as to provide  
17 links between students and their community.

18 EXPLANATION

19 This bill appropriates \$50,000 from the general fund of the  
20 state to the department of education for fiscal year 2001-2002  
21 for purposes of smaller learning communities pilot program  
22 grants to school districts for activities related to  
23 establishing smaller learning communities in high schools.

24 The bill is based on a federal program of the same name  
25 (section 10105 of part A of title X of the Elementary and  
26 Secondary Education Act of 1965). To be eligible under the  
27 program, a school district must submit an application to the  
28 department of education that describes its strategies and  
29 methods for creating the smaller learning community,  
30 curriculum and instructional practices, the extent of and  
31 process of involving staff in investigating, designing,  
32 implementing and sustaining the smaller learning community,  
33 any cooperation or collaboration among community entities, the  
34 training and professional development activities that will be  
35 offered, the goals and objectives of the activities, program

1 assessment methods, the smaller learning community's  
2 relationship to the rest of the school, the administrative and  
3 managerial relationship between the school district and the  
4 smaller learning community, including how the school district  
5 will demonstrate a commitment to the continuity of the smaller  
6 learning community, including the continuity of student and  
7 teacher assignment to a particular smaller learning community,  
8 how the school district will coordinate funding streams, the  
9 grade levels or ages of participating students, and the method  
10 of placing students.

11 Funds must be used by the school district to study the  
12 feasibility of creating the smaller learning community or  
13 communities; research, develop, and implement strategies for  
14 creating the smaller learning community or communities;  
15 provide innovative professional development; and develop and  
16 implement strategies to include community members in the  
17 smaller learning communities.

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