

1 State of Arkansas
2 94th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2023
4

As Engrossed: S3/29/23

A Bill

SENATE BILL 470

5 By: Senators J. Dotson, J. English, J. Bryant
6 By: Representative Beck
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT CONCERNING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION; TO
10 AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING WEIGHTED CREDIT AWARDED FOR
11 CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION COURSES; TO AMEND THE
12 LAW CONCERNING STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS
13 USED TO MEASURE COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS; TO
14 AMEND THE COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION ADVANCEMENT ACT
15 OF 2021 TO INCLUDE COMPUTER SCIENCE-RELATED CAREER
16 AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION COURSES AS ELIGIBLE FOR
17 CREDIT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
18

Subtitle

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21 CONCERNING CAREER AND TECHNICAL
22 EDUCATION.
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25 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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27 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative intent.

28 The General Assembly finds and declares that:

29 (1) It is critical to expand the opportunities available to
30 public school students who pursue career and technical education pathways;

31 (2) The State of Arkansas must level the playing field for
32 students who choose a career and technical education pathway by ensuring
33 their accomplishments within a career and technical education pathway are
34 deemed just as significant as those achieved by college-bound students who
35 graduate high school with honors;

36 (3) Ensuring that career and technical education assessments are



1 weighted in a similar manner as traditional education assessments is an
2 important step in providing students with additional options available to
3 them following high school graduation; and

4 (4) It is imperative that career and technical education as a
5 whole is supported on the state level as an equal alternative to traditional
6 educational pathways by implementing legislative solutions that address
7 existing shortfalls faced by students who pursue career and technical
8 education pathways.

9
10 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-902(c)(4), concerning career and
11 technical courses that are eligible for weighted credit, is amended to read
12 as follows:

13 (4)(A) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education in
14 collaboration with the Division of Career and Technical Education may approve
15 a career and technical course within an approved career and technical pathway
16 for weighted credit if the course:

17 ~~(A)(i)~~ Exceeds the curriculum standards for a nonweighted
18 class; and
19 ~~(B)(ii)~~ Leads to an approved industry-recognized
20 certification.

21 (B) The Division of Career and Technical Education shall:
22 (i) Review new and existing career and technical
23 pathways to determine which courses within the career and technical pathways
24 meet criteria for weighted credit; and

25 (ii) Publish a list of approved career and technical
26 pathways annually by January 1.

27 (C) Criteria used to determine what courses within a
28 career and technical pathway shall receive weighted credit shall include
29 without limitation the consideration of career and technical pathways that:

30 (i) Lead to high-value industry credentials; and
31 (ii) Align to state and local workforce data.

32 (D) Weighted credit awarded under subdivision (c)(4)(A) of
33 this section shall be awarded for each course upon:

34 (i) Completing the relevant career and technical
35 pathway; and

36 (ii) Earning the high-value industry credential

1 aligned with the career and technical pathway.

2
3 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2907(a), concerning statewide student
4 assessments to measure college and career readiness, is amended to read as
5 follows:

6 (a) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall implement
7 a statewide student assessment system to be administered by Arkansas public
8 schools on a schedule determined by the State Board of Education that
9 includes the following components:

10 (1) Developmentally appropriate measurements or assessments for
11 kindergarten through grade two (K-2) in literacy and mathematics;

12 (2) Assessments to measure English language arts, mathematics,
13 and science as identified by the state board;

14 (3) Assessments of English proficiency of all English learners;
15 and

16 (4)(A) Assessments to measure college and career readiness.

17 (B)(i) A public school that serves a student in grades ten
18 through twelve (10-12) shall administer college and career readiness
19 assessments, including a career readiness assessment that leads to a nationally
20 recognized work readiness certificate, as determined by the state board to each
21 student before he or she graduates from high school.

22 (ii) A career readiness assessment under subdivision
23 (a)(4)(B)(i) of this section may include without limitation the ACT WorkKeys
24 National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC).

25 (C)(i) Public school districts may offer additional
26 college and career readiness assessments for students in grades ten through
27 twelve (10-12) at no cost to the student by using public school district
28 funding, including without limitation Enhanced Student Achievement Funding
29 under § 6-20-2305.

30 (ii) A Platinum, Gold, Silver, or Bronze credential
31 through the ACT WorkKeys (NCRC) shall be used by an institution of higher
32 education as transcribable credit toward the attainment of a postsecondary
33 technical degree.

34
35 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-16-152(b) and (c), concerning
36 requirements under the Computer Science Education Advancement Act of 2021,

1 are amended to read as follows:

2 (b)(1) Beginning with the entering ninth grade class of 2022-2023, a
3 public high school student shall be required to earn one (1) unit of credit
4 in a Department of Education-approved high school computer science or
5 computer science-related career and technical education course before the
6 student graduates.

7 (2) The one (1) unit required in subdivision (b)(1) of this
8 section may be earned in grades eight through twelve (8-12).

9 (3) A computer science or computer science-related career and
10 technical education course offered by a public high school shall:

11 (A) Be of high quality;

12 (B) Meet or exceed the curriculum standards and
13 requirements established by the State Board of Education; and

14 (C) Be made available in a traditional classroom setting,
15 a blended learning environment, an online-based or other technology-based
16 format that is tailored to meet the needs of each participating student.

17 (4) The Division of Career and Technical Education within the
18 Department of Education shall work with the Arkansas Computer Science
19 Initiative within the Department of Education to establish by rule the
20 minimum criteria by which a career and technical education course may be
21 approved as a computer science-related career and technical education course.

22 (c)(1) The department shall designate at least four (4) state board-
23 approved computer science or computer science-related career and technical
24 education courses that students in grade eight (8) may take for high school
25 credit.

26 (2) If a student in grade eight (8) wishes to take a course not
27 designated, a school district ~~must~~ shall comply with any existing course
28 approval requirements.

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30 SECTION 5. DO NOT CODIFY. Applicability.

31 A student who has been approved for weighted credit in a career and
32 technical course under § 6-15-902(c)(4) prior to the effective date of this
33 act shall receive weighted credit for the career and technical course in
34 which the student is currently enrolled in the form in which the weighted
35 credit has been approved.

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/s/J. Dotson

APPROVED: 4/11/23