

1 State of Arkansas  
2 91st General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2017  
4

As Engrossed: S3/23/17

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 506

5 By: Senator J. English  
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## For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF TITLE 6 OF THE ARKANSAS  
9 CODE CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A DIGITAL LEARNING  
10 TASK FORCE; TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE  
11 CONCERNING DIGITAL LEARNING COURSES; TO DECLARE AN  
12 EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
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## Subtitle

15 TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE  
16 CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A DIGITAL  
17 LEARNING TASK FORCE; TO AMEND PROVISIONS  
18 OF THE ARKANSAS CODE CONCERNING DIGITAL  
19 LEARNING COURSES; AND TO DECLARE AN  
20 EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
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24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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26 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-16-1406 is amended to read as follows:

27 6-16-1406. ~~Pilot program—~~ Digital learning courses.

28 ~~(a)(1)(A) Beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, all public school~~  
29 ~~districts and public charter schools participating in a pilot program shall~~  
30 ~~provide at least one (1) digital learning course to their students as either~~  
31 ~~a primary or supplementary method of instruction.~~

32 ~~(B) The Department of Education shall adopt rules to~~  
33 ~~implement the pilot program, the purpose of which shall be to more smoothly~~  
34 ~~implement the requirements under subdivision (a)(2) of this section.~~

35 ~~(2) Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, all All public~~  
36 ~~school districts and public charter schools shall provide at least one (1)~~



1 digital learning course to their students as either a primary or  
2 supplementary method of instruction.

3 (b) All digital learning courses provided by public school districts  
4 or public charter schools shall:

5 (1) Be of high quality;

6 (2) Meet or exceed the curriculum standards and requirements  
7 established by the State Board of Education; and

8 (3) Be made available in a blended learning, online-based, or  
9 other technology-based format tailored to meet the needs of each  
10 participating student.

11 (c) Digital learning courses shall be capable of being assessed and  
12 measured through standardized tests or local assessments.

13 (d) Beginning with the entering ninth grade class of the 2014-2015  
14 school year, each high school student shall be required to take at least one  
15 (1) digital learning course for credit to graduate.

16 (e) ~~The State Board of Education~~ state board shall not limit the  
17 number of digital learning courses for which a student may receive credit  
18 through a public school or a public charter school and shall ensure that  
19 digital learning courses may be used as both primary and secondary methods of  
20 instruction.

21 (f) The state board may promulgate rules to implement this section.

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23 SECTION 2. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY. Quality Digital  
24 Learning Provider Task Force.

25 (a) There is created the "Task Force on Quality Digital Learning  
26 Providers".

27 (b) The task force shall be composed of thirteen (13) members as  
28 follows:

29 (1) The Commissioner of Education, or his or her designee;

30 (2) The Director of the Department of Career Education, or his  
31 or her designee;

32 (3) The Executive Director of the Arkansas Public School  
33 Resource Center, or his or her designee;

34 (4) The Executive Director of the Arkansas Association of  
35 Educational Administrators, or his or her designee;

36 (5) The Executive Director of the Arkansas Association for

1 Supervision and Curriculum Development, or his or her designee;

2 (6) The Executive Director of the Arkansas Education

3 Association, or his or her designee;

4 (7) The Executive Director of the Arkansas School Boards

5 Association, or his or her designee;

6 (8) The Executive Director of the Arkansas Rural Education

7 Association, or his or her designee; and

8 (9) Five (5) members appointed by the commissioner as follows:

9 (A) An employee of the Department of Education;

10 (B) A representative from an education service

11 cooperative;

12 (C) A superintendent of an Arkansas public school

13 district;

14 (D) A director of an Arkansas open-enrollment public

15 charter school; and

16 (E) A representative from a private digital learning

17 provider.

18 (c)(1) The commissioner shall call the first meeting of the task force  
19 within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this act.

20 (2) At the first meeting of the task force, the members of the  
21 task force shall elect from its membership a chair and other officers as  
22 needed for the transaction of business.

23 (3)(A) The task force shall conduct its meetings at the  
24 Department of Education or another site selected by the chair.

25 (B) Meetings of the task force shall be held at least one  
26 (1) time every three (3) months but may occur more often at the call of the  
27 chair.

28 (4) If a vacancy occurs on the task force, the vacancy shall be  
29 filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

30 (5) The members of the task force shall serve without  
31 compensation.

32 (6) A majority of the task force shall constitute a quorum for  
33 transacting business.

34 (7) The Department of Education shall provide staff for the task  
35 force.

36 (d) By December 1, 2018, the task force shall provide a report to the

1 Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro  
2 Tempore of the Senate, and the State Board of Education.

3 (e)(1) The report shall make recommendations concerning methods to:

4 (A) Improve the quality and educational benefit of digital  
5 learning for Arkansas students;

6 (B) Expand the availability, efficiency, and quality of  
7 digital learning available to Arkansas public schools;

8 (C) Create the proper environment and delivery structure  
9 for digital learning and delivery of digital learning;

10 (D) Develop and improve standards for digital learning  
11 content;

12 (E) Attract additional high-quality digital learning  
13 providers to the Arkansas market; and

14 (F) Ensure affordable and efficient delivery of digital  
15 learning with broad access for both providers and consumers.

16 (2) To make these recommendations, the task force shall review  
17 various factors and approaches, including without limitation:

18 (A) The current availability and cost of digital learning  
19 content and courses for kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) education,  
20 concurrent credit, and career education;

21 (B) The structure and cost for delivering digital learning  
22 content;

23 (C) Resource availability within Arkansas public schools,  
24 the public sector at large, and the private sector;

25 (D) Quality control measures and standards that may  
26 effectively be applied to digital learning;

27 (E) Digital learning experiences in other states and in  
28 the private sector;

29 (F) Any appropriate legislative changes, if any, to the  
30 Digital Learning Act of 2013, § 6-16-1401 et seq., or other state law; and

31 (G) Any appropriate changes, if any, to the rules of the  
32 department and state board related to digital learning.

33 (f) The task force shall expire upon the submission of the report.

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35 SECTION 3. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the  
36 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that The Digital Learning Act of

1 2013 expanded the need for digital learning courses in Arkansas public  
2 schools; that the Eighty-Ninth General Assembly directed the House Committee  
3 on Education and the Senate Committee on Education to implement a study  
4 concerning quality digital learning; that the report that resulted from this  
5 study made significant recommendations regarding the expansion of internet  
6 bandwidth for Arkansas public schools; that under the leadership of the  
7 Governor, the Department of Information Systems and the Department of  
8 Education are making rapid progress in expanding the availability of high-  
9 speed broadband connectivity for Arkansas public schools; that with the  
10 expanded broadband connectivity now available to Arkansas public schools, it  
11 is necessary and appropriate for the state to expand and improve the  
12 availability, efficiency, quality, and educational benefit of digital  
13 learning content from both public and private providers; that time is of the  
14 essence to ensure that the Quality Digital Learning Provider Task Force  
15 created by this act may conduct a comprehensive review and develop in-depth  
16 recommendations in time for those recommendations to be considered by the  
17 Nintey-Second General Assembly in 2019; and that this act is immediately  
18 necessary in order to constitute a task force to immediately begin the work  
19 required in this act. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this  
20 act being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace,  
21 health, and safety shall become effective on:

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

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

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

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29 /s/J. English

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32 **APPROVED: 04/05/2017**