



2013 Legislation Related to Curriculum Frameworks

As part of the adequacy study, Arkansas Code §10-3-2102 requires the House and Senate Education Committees to review "legislation enacted or rules promulgated during the biennium covered by the study to determine the impact of the legislation and rules on educational adequacy-related public school costs." The following acts have been identified as "adequacy-related" legislation that falls under the topic area of curriculum frameworks. This document describes the legislation and provides information from each bill's fiscal impact.

Act 599 of 2013: An act concerning band, music, and visual arts credits for public school students in middle school and high school

This act allows students in the 7th and 8th grades to choose between taking:

- a semester of visual arts and a semester of performing arts each year OR
- a full year of visual arts or a full year of performing arts each year

The Arkansas Department of Education's interpretation of the accreditation standards in place before the law's passage requires 7th and 8th graders to receive instruction in both visual arts and performing arts each year. Now, instead of being required to take a semester of visual arts and a semester of performing arts, students will be allowed to take band, for example, all year long.

Fiscal Impact: This legislation would have a potential impact on the school districts. "The impact for school districts would be based on the need to hire additional staff to provide this instruction."

Act 1280 of 2013: An act to amend the Voluntary Universal ACT Assessment Program Act

This legislation's main function is to allow school districts to use district funding to pay the cost for 9th, 10th and 11th graders to take the ACT free of charge for students. State statute before this law's passage allowed for districts to use district money for 11th grade test takers.

The bill also changes the definition of Smart Core from "the required curriculum that is part of the Smart Future, a state initiative focused on improving Arkansas public schools for all students so they are prepared for life and beyond graduation" to "the college and career readiness curriculum by that name under the rules of the State Board of Education."

Fiscal Impact: This legislation could have varying impact on district NSLA funds. Underlying these costs are the cost of administering the test (\$35) and the number of students who choose to take the exam (in 2012-13, 107,694 students were enrolled in grades 9, 10, and 11).

Act 1462 of 2013: An act to provide digital learning opportunities in public schools

This legislation requires all school districts to provide at least one digital learning course beginning in the 2014-15 school year. The law also establishes a pilot program in 2013-14 in which a group of school districts will provide at least one digital learning course. The law also establishes criteria for companies to become "approved digital learning providers" in Arkansas.

Fiscal Impact: This legislation could have an impact on revenue but the impact depends on varying funding requirements of the districts.

Act 585 of 2013: An act to enhance college and career readiness and postsecondary completion in Arkansas; to establish the council on postsecondary education and career readiness

This legislation creates a Council on Postsecondary Education and Career Readiness to develop a strategy for reducing remediation rates among high school graduates entering postsecondary education by at least 50% by the year 2020. The Council will also develop a strategy for increasing postsecondary graduation and completion rates.

Fiscal Impact: This bill would have no impact to the state treasury.