

SUMMARY OF GENERAL LEGISLATION

.....

91ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS

2017

Regular Session
January 9, 2017 – May 1, 2017

.....

First Extraordinary Session
May 1, 2017 – May 3, 2017



Bureau of Legislative Research
May 2017

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Natural Gas Infrastructure Expansion

ACT 280 (SB265) promotes economic development and natural gas infrastructure expansion through extension projects of gas utilities. The act requires consideration of the economic benefit to the gas utility and its existing ratepayers and the public interest before a certificate of extension project is granted by the Arkansas Public Service Commission.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Arkansas Acceleration Fund Act - Arkansas Research Alliance Duties

ACT 167 (SB248) eliminates the duties of the Arkansas Research Alliance under the Arkansas Acceleration Fund Act and provides for the Board of Directors of the Division of Science and Technology of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission to assume most of the alliance's eliminated duties.

TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS - NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - TITLE 15

ACT 374 (HB1484) makes technical corrections recommended by the Arkansas Code Revision Commission to Title 15 of the Arkansas Code.

EDUCATION - GENERAL

ADMINISTRATION - GENERALLY

Accountability System

ACT 930 (SB647) repeals the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program Act and establishes the Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act, which implements the new federal education law.

Administrator Evaluations

ACT 295 (HB1424) requires the Department of Education to design a system of administrator leadership support and evaluations.

Immunity

ACT 1040 (SB621) provides that a superintendent and personnel of the Department of Education are immune from civil liability for the enforcement of a policy that is in compliance with state or federal law.

Obsolete Laws

ACT 929 (SB562) repeals obsolete laws concerning public education.

Public School Choice Act of 2015

ACT 1066 (SB372) amends various provisions of the Public School Choice Act of 2015. The act provides that a transfer is voided if the transferred student enrolls in a private or home school, repeals the provision that the State Board of Education may resolve transportation disputes, and establishes a timeline for the nonresident district to notify the resident district of a transfer application. The act requires a school district that claims an exemption from participation in the Public School Choice Act of 2015 because the school district is under an active desegregation court order or desegregation plan to provide certain documentation. The act requires the Department of Education to maintain a list on its website of the school districts that are not required to participate. The act also repeals language requiring the department to collect data to determine if a racially segregative impact has occurred to any school district as a result of participation. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after April 6, 2017.

School Leadership Coordinating Council

ACT 344 (HB1019) amends the membership of the School Leadership Coordinating Council.

EDUCATION - GENERAL
ADMINISTRATION - GENERALLY

School Rating System

ACT 744 (HB1608) requires that the school rating system consider multiple measures, including academic achievement and student growth on the annual statewide student assessment, graduation rates, and English learner progress or growth. The act requires the school rating system to consider at least one (1) additional indicator chosen by the Department of Education from a list of indicators set out in the act.

Schools of Innovation

ACT 871 (HB2052) requires schools of innovation to demonstrate implementation of professional learning communities.

Various

ACT 936 (SB596) amends various references in the law to be consistent with the enactment of the new accountability system, the Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act, and the new federal education law.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agriculture School

ACT 742 (HB1902) repeals the K-12 Agriculture School Pilot Program, provides that the State Board of Education may designate a charter school as a School for Agricultural Studies, and allows a School for Agricultural Studies to petition the State Board of Education for the creation of a new school district by detachment.

Meeting Dates - Professional Development Credit

ACT 745 (HB1646) allows a school district to contract with an outside entity to provide direct-service Medicaid billing services, includes open-enrollment public charter schools in the definition of "public school" as it relates to tornado safety drills, revises the time for which the State Board of Education shall determine the state board's meeting dates for the following year, adds an additional method for a teacher to receive training for teaching an advanced placement course that is given weighted credit, allows a person who holds a license issued by the State Board of Education to obtain professional development credit through micro-credentialing, and establishes the unsafe school choice program. The act also repeals various obsolete provisions in the Arkansas Code concerning education, makes technical corrections, and updates references to the federal education law.

Teacher Licensure

ACT 294 (HB1425) authorizes the State Board of Education to establish a tiered system of teacher licensure and allows teacher compensation to be based on licensure levels.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Admission of Expelled Students

ACT 990 (HB1672) provides that an open-enrollment public charter may allow for the exclusion from admission of a student who has been expelled from another public school district in the same manner as a public school district may allow for the student's exclusion.

Agriculture School

ACT 742 (HB1902) repeals the K-12 Agriculture School Pilot Program, provides that the State Board of Education may designate a charter school as a School for Agricultural Studies, and allows a School for Agricultural Studies to petition the State Board of Education for the creation of a new school district by detachment.

Charter Authorizing Panel

ACT 462 (SB304) allows the Commissioner of Education to appoint individuals from outside the Department of Education to the public charter authorizing panel.

EDUCATION - GENERAL
CHARTER SCHOOLS

Enrollment in Individual Courses

ACT 173 (HB1208) provides that a public school district or an open-enrollment public charter school may adopt a policy to allow a student who attends a private school or home school to enroll in an academic course at a public school or an open-enrollment public charter school.

Facilities

ACT 542 (SB308) provides that a public charter school has a right of first refusal to purchase or lease an unused or underutilized public school facility.

Operation and Funding

ACT 933 (SB416) amends various provisions of the law concerning the operation and funding of charter schools. The act removes references to limited public charter schools, clarifies the procedure for returning state funds when a charter has been revoked, revises requirements for charter applications and enrollment preferences, adds information to the authorizer's annual status report, and clarifies how charter schools are funded during the first year operating under a new license and the first year adding a new campus.

CURRICULUM

African-American History

ACT 561 (SB519) provides that the Commissioner of Education shall update the course materials for the teaching of African-American history to emphasize the work of American civil rights leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The act requires this information to be taught in conjunction with corresponding state and federal holidays.

Arkansas History

ACT 561 (SB519) provides that the Department of Education shall develop materials or units related to Arkansas and the American Civil War with an emphasis on the civilian and military leadership during this period.

Personal and Family Finance Standards

ACT 480 (HB1442) requires the Department of Education to develop personal and family finance standards and requires a public high school student earn a credit in a course that includes the standards in grade ten (10), grade eleven (11), or grade twelve (12) in order to graduate from high school. The act applies beginning with the entering ninth grade class of the 2017-2018 school year.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Accountability

ACT 869 (HB1648) modifies the manner in which the Department of Education shall conduct a Standards of Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School District review, the method of publishing annual school performance reports, and provisions related to school incentive funding.

Annual Discipline Report

ACT 1015 (HB1859) modifies the contents of the Department of Education's annual school discipline report and requires the report to be published on the website of the department.

Charter Authorizing Panel

ACT 462 (SB304) allows the Commissioner of Education to appoint individuals from outside the Department of Education to the public charter authorizing panel.

EDUCATION - GENERAL

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Course Materials - African-American History

ACT 561 (SB519) provides that the Commissioner of Education shall update the course materials for the teaching of African-American history to emphasize the work of American civil rights leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The act requires this information to be taught in conjunction with corresponding state and federal holidays.

Course Materials - Arkansas History

ACT 561 (SB519) provides that the Department of Education shall develop materials or units related to Arkansas and the American Civil War with an emphasis on the civilian and military leadership during this period.

Electronic Signatures

ACT 873 (HB1407) provides that a school or school district may submit required signatures electronically with reports or data required to be submitted to the Department of Education and the Department of Career Education.

Personal and Family Finance Standards

ACT 480 (HB1442) requires the Department of Education to develop personal and family finance standards and requires a public high school student earn a credit in a course that includes the standards in grade ten (10), grade eleven (11), or grade twelve (12) in order to graduate from high school. The act applies beginning with the entering ninth grade class of the 2017-2018 school year.

Posting Child Abuse Hotline Telephone Number

ACT 379 (HB1435) requires the Department of Education to ensure that every public school and open-enrollment public charter school posts a sign that contains the toll-free telephone number for the Child Abuse Hotline in a public area of the school as well as in each student restroom.

Professional Development Funding

ACT 427 (HB1154) provides that additional funding appropriated for professional development above the statutory per student amount shall be used to develop and administer professional learning communities for public school districts.

Professional Licensure Standards Board

ACT 564 (HB1591) revises the composition of the Professional Licensure Standards Board and amends the duties of the board. The act authorizes the board to establish a code of ethics for teachers working under a waiver from licensure and raises the maximum fine that may be levied by the board. The act requires the Department of Education to include those who have received a waiver from licensure on the website used by school hiring officials to determine if a licensed person has been sanctioned for an ethics complaint involving sexual abuse of a student.

Recess

ACT 1062 (SB549) creates a one-year pilot program conducted by the Department of Education to expand the amount of recess provided to students in grades kindergarten through grade six (K-6). The act provides that the department shall seek to identify two (2) schools within the service area of each education service cooperative and two (2) schools not served by an education service cooperative to participate in the pilot program.

EDUCATION - GENERAL

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

School Rating System

ACT 744 (HB1608) requires that the school rating system consider multiple measures, including academic achievement and student growth on the annual statewide student assessment, graduation rates, and English learner progress or growth. The act requires the school rating system to consider at least one (1) additional indicator chosen by the Department of Education from a list of indicators set out in the act.

Teacher Health Insurance

ACT 298 (HB1307) requires the Department of Education to transfer funds to the Employee Benefits Division of the Department of Finance and Administration for teacher health insurance. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after July 1, 2017.

FACILITIES

Advisory Committee on Public School Academic Facilities

ACT 801 (HB1929) modifies the membership of the Advisory Committee on Public School Academic Facilities and clarifies that the members of the committee shall be appointed by the Commission for Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation. The act also requires the committee to conduct a comprehensive review of academic facilities programs by July 31, 2018. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after April 1, 2017.

Charter School - Right of First Refusal

ACT 542 (SB308) provides that a public charter school has a right of first refusal to purchase or lease an unused or underutilized public school facility.

Review Conferences

ACT 864 (HB1925) modifies the timeline for requesting and conducting a review conference between a public school district and the Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation and modifies the content of the review conference.

Various

ACT 935 (SB646) amends various provisions in the law concerning public school academic facilities. The act revises the advertising requirements of a bond sale, repeals requirements relating to the time for the payment of semiannual interest payments for second-lien bonds, adds a definition of "building" in the Arkansas Public School Academic Facilities Funding Act, makes various technical corrections, and requires academic facilities master plans to be updated when new facilities are constructed.

FUNDING

Bonded Debt Assistance

ACT 931 (SB645) provides that savings from refunding school district bonds may be used for any school or school district purpose.

Enhanced Transportation Funding

ACT 445 (SB303) provides enhanced transportation funding for the 2016-2017 school year to public school districts with high transportation costs. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 9, 2017.

Funding Amounts

ACT 743 (HB1729) modifies the funding amount for the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018-2019 school year concerning per-student foundation funding and state categorical funding. The act provides enhanced transportation funding for school districts that have high transportation costs. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 29, 2017.

EDUCATION - GENERAL

FUNDING

Funding and Indebtedness

ACT 741 (HB1689) provides methods that an education service cooperative may use to provide necessary facilities; clarifies the definition of "local contribution rate" as it relates to public school employees' health insurance programs; requires a school district to notify the Department of Education upon incurring indebtedness; changes the date for the final close in the general ledger database of a school district, open-enrollment public charter school, or education service cooperative; changes the number of monthly payments for distribution of foundation funding aid; and amends the student growth funding calculation.

Professional Development

ACT 427 (HB1154) provides that additional funding appropriated for professional development above the statutory per student amount shall be used to develop and administer professional learning communities for public school districts.

Special Needs Isolated Funding

ACT 129 (SB23) revises the density ratio to receive certain special needs isolated funding.

The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after February 6, 2017.

GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts

ACT 718 (SB531) provides that the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts is a residential high school, the board of visitors must meet quarterly, and students from other countries may be selected to attend the school. The act repeals obsolete language concerning the transition of the school to becoming a campus of the University of Arkansas.

HOME SCHOOLS

Enrollment in Individual Courses

ACT 173 (HB1208) provides that a public school district or an open-enrollment public charter school may adopt a policy to allow a student who attends a private school or home school to enroll in an academic course at a public school or an open-enrollment public charter school.

Notice of Intent to Home School

ACT 635 (HB1574) revises the contents of the notice of intent to home school that the parent or legal guardian of a student must provide to the superintendent of the local school district and the manner in which the notice may be given. The act provides that the information contained in the notice is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act of 1967.

Participation in Interscholastic Activities at a Public School

ACT 592 (HB1474) provides that a home-schooled student approved to participate at a public school in an interscholastic activity that is an athletic activity may participate in the athletic activity one (1) calendar year after being approved. The act provides that if the interscholastic activity is not an athletic activity, the home-schooled student may participate immediately after being approved. The act also requires a public school to provide a reasonable alternative to a home-schooled student for any prerequisite for participation in an interscholastic activity if the home-schooled student is unable to meet the prerequisite because of enrollment in a home school.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Entry upon Campus by a Registered Sex Offender

ACT 909 (HB1687) concerns the requirements a registered Level 3 or Level 4 sex offender must satisfy to enter upon the campus of a private school.

EDUCATION - GENERAL

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Home-schooled Students' Participation in Interscholastic Activities

ACT 453 (HB1481) provides that private schools may approve a home-schooled student to participate in interscholastic activities at the private school.

Succeed Scholarship Program - Enrollment Waiver

ACT 637 (HB1056) allows the superintendent of a student's resident school district to waive the requirement that a student be enrolled in a public school for one (1) academic year in order to be eligible for a Succeed Scholarship.

Succeed Scholarship Program - Private Schools

ACT 327 (HB1461) provides that a private school is eligible to participate in the Succeed Scholarship Program if the private school is an associate member of or has applied for accreditation by an accrediting association recognized by the State Board of Education. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 2, 2017.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS - GENERALLY

Accountability

ACT 869 (HB1648) modifies the manner in which the Department of Education shall conduct a Standards of Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School District review, the method of publishing annual school performance reports, and provisions related to school incentive funding.

Administration

ACT 745 (HB1646) allows a school district to contract with an outside entity to provide direct-service Medicaid billing services, includes open-enrollment public charter schools in the definition of "public school" as it relates to tornado safety drills, revises the time for which the State Board of Education shall determine the state board's meeting dates for the following year, adds an additional method for a teacher to receive training for teaching an advanced placement course that is given weighted credit, allows a person who holds a license issued by the State Board of Education to obtain professional development credit through micro-credentialing, and establishes the unsafe school choice program. The act also repeals various obsolete provisions in the Arkansas Code concerning education, makes technical corrections, and updates references to the federal education law.

Agriculture School

ACT 742 (HB1902) repeals the K-12 Agriculture School Pilot Program, provides that the State Board of Education may designate a charter school as a School for Agricultural Studies, and allows a School for Agricultural Studies to petition the State Board of Education for the creation of a new school district by detachment.

Alternative Method of Instruction

ACT 862 (HB1457) provides that the Commissioner of Education may grant up to ten (10) student attendance days for public school districts that use an alternative instruction plan approved by the commissioner on days when the public school district is closed due to emergency circumstances.

Automated School Bus Safety Camera

ACT 398 (HB1144) allows a public school district or an open enrollment public charter school to install and operate an automated school bus safety camera on a school bus.

Awarding Credit Based on Subject Matter Competency

ACT 872 (HB1459) allows a public school district to submit a plan to the Department of Education for approval to award credit based on a demonstration of subject matter competency.

EDUCATION - GENERAL
SCHOOL DISTRICTS - GENERALLY

Board of Directors

ACT 589 (HB1523) provides that a member of a board of directors of a public school district may be suspended or removed from office if the member does not receive the required training.

Classified Employees

ACT 938 (SB570) repeals the requirement that a public school or school district provide a thirty-minute uninterrupted duty-free lunch period for full-time nonexempt classified employees.

Declaratory Relief Concerning a Tax

ACT 1030 (HB1821) requires that notice of an action for declaratory relief related to a tax be given to a government entity or school district whose direct revenue could be affected by the outcome of the action. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after April 6, 2017.

Delay or Early Release of School

ACT 747 (HB1905) revises the reasons to delay the start time of a school day or release a school early to include a contagious disease outbreak and a utility outage.

Discipline

ACT 1059 (SB609) prohibits a public school district from using out-of-school suspension or expulsion for a kindergarten through grade five (K-5) student unless the student's behavior poses a physical risk to the student or others or causes a serious disruption that cannot be addressed through other means.

Display of National Motto, United States Flag, and Arkansas Flag

ACT 911 (HB1980) requires superintendents of public schools and administrative officials of state agencies, if funds are available, to display the national motto of the United States, a representation of the United States flag, and a representation of the Arkansas state flag in each public school library and classroom and each public building or facility.

Elections

ACT 586 (HB1632) provides for the county clerk to verify information in a petition for candidacy or a notice of intent to be a write-in candidate for a position on the board of directors of a public school district.

Electronic Signatures

ACT 873 (HB1407) provides that a school or school district may submit required signatures electronically with reports or data required to be submitted to the Department of Education and the Department of Career Education.

Enrollment in Individual Courses

ACT 173 (HB1208) provides that a public school district or an open-enrollment public charter school may adopt a policy to allow a student who attends a private school or home school to enroll in an academic course at a public school or an open-enrollment public charter school.

Entities Permitted to Represent a Public School District in Certain Matters

ACT 558 (SB369) concerns the practice of law by a nonprofit corporation, voluntary association, or instrumentality of the government recognized under 26 U.S.C. § 115.

Entry of a Registered Sex Offender on a Public School Campus

ACT 267 (SB32) amends the requirements that a person assessed as a Level 3 sex offender must satisfy in order to enter onto a public school campus for the purpose of attending a school-sponsored event for which an admission fee is charged or tickets are sold.

EDUCATION - GENERAL

SCHOOL DISTRICTS - GENERALLY

Exemption from Freedom of Information Act

ACT 541 (SB12) provides that emergency or security plan records and records related to security officers of a public school, public school district, or state-supported institution of higher education are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act of 1967.

Facilities

ACT 542 (SB308) provides that a public charter school has a right of first refusal to purchase or lease an unused or underutilized public school facility.

Fund Balances

ACT 1105 (HB1575) provides that a school district that has a net legal balance that exceeds twenty percent (20%) of the public school district's current year net legal balance revenues shall reduce its net legal balance over a period of five (5) years to no more than twenty percent (20%) of the net legal balance revenues.

Home-schooled Students - Enrollment

ACT 863 (HB1740) modifies the requirements for a home-schooled student to enroll or re-enroll in a public school.

Home-schooled Students - Interscholastic Activities

ACT 592 (HB1474) provides that a home-schooled student approved to participate at a public school in an interscholastic activity that is an athletic activity may participate in the athletic activity one (1) calendar year after being approved. The act provides that if the interscholastic activity is not an athletic activity, the home-schooled student may participate immediately after being approved. The act also requires a public school to provide a reasonable alternative to a home-schooled student for any prerequisite for participation in an interscholastic activity if the home-schooled student is unable to meet the prerequisite because of enrollment in a home school.

Inter-district Transfers

ACT 1065 (SB371) provides that a student may remain in his or her current school if the student's parent relocates within the state due to a military mobilization, deployment, or available military housing. The act provides that a student transfer by agreement between school districts constitutes an independent agreement between the school districts and is not subject to other student transfer laws. The act repeals prohibitions on granting a legal transfer for desegregation-related provisions other than if the resident or receiving school district is under a desegregation-related court order and granting the transfer would violate the court order.

Member of School District Board of Directors - Ethics

ACT 449 (HB1589) includes a member of a school district board of directors within certain definitions for purposes of ethics laws.

Notice of Intent to Home School

ACT 635 (HB1574) revises the contents of the notice of intent to home school that the parent or legal guardian of a student must provide to the superintendent of the local school district and the manner in which the notice may be given. The act provides that the information contained in the notice is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act of 1967.

Patriotic Societies

ACT 1069 (SB662) provides that a public school shall allow a patriotic society to speak with students during school hours and use a school building or any property to provide services to students at times other than instructional time during the school day.

EDUCATION - GENERAL
SCHOOL DISTRICTS - GENERALLY

Procurement

ACT 1124 (SB329) raises the purchase price threshold for the requirement of school districts to solicit bids to procure a commodity. The act provides that the Commissioner of Education shall annually adjust the purchase price threshold by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers.

Professional Development Concerning Human Trafficking

ACT 765 (HB1417) concerns the deterrence and education of persons regarding prostitution, sexual solicitation, and human trafficking offenses, including motor vehicle impoundment, increased penalties for sexual solicitation, human trafficking professional development by school districts, and the creation of the Human Trafficking Victim Support Fund.

Purchase of Motor Vehicles

ACT 442 (HB1533) allows a school district to purchase a new motor vehicle from a licensed motor vehicle dealer if the purchase price of the motor vehicle does not exceed the fleet price awarded by the Office of State Procurement.

School Bus Passenger Restraint Systems

ACT 375 (HB1002) requires that a school district equip a school bus with a passenger restraint system for each student transported if a petition signed by at least ten percent (10%) of a school district's qualified electors is submitted requesting passenger restraint systems and voted on during the annual school elections. The act requires the school district to pay for the passenger restraint systems through the levy of an additional annual ad valorem property tax or with any funds available to the school district.

School Choice for Foster Children

ACT 988 (HB1855) provides that a public school or school district shall allow a foster child to transfer to the public school or school district if the Department of Human Services determines that the transfer is in the best interest of the child.

School District Coordinators

ACT 196 (SB281) repeals obsolete language concerning school district coordinators.

Succeed Scholarship Program

ACT 637 (HB1056) allows the superintendent of a student's resident school district to waive the requirement that a student be enrolled in a public school for one (1) academic year in order to be eligible for a Succeed Scholarship.

Tuition for Concurrent Enrollment Courses

ACT 1118 (SB673) provides that a national school lunch student shall not be required to pay the costs of certain endorsed concurrent enrollment courses up to a maximum of six (6) hours. The act requires the costs to be paid by the public school district, by the institution of higher education offering the course, or through a cost-sharing agreement between the public school district and the institution of higher education. The act also provides that any costs paid by an institution of higher education shall not be considered an institutional scholarship.

Voluntary Universal ACT Assessment Program

ACT 601 (HB1640) requires a public school district to allow a student to choose to take the ACT under the Voluntary Universal ACT Assessment Program in grade ten (10) or grade eleven (11).

EDUCATION - GENERAL

SCHOOL DISTRICTS - GENERALLY

Volunteers

ACT 428 (HB1266) provides that a member or the spouse of a member of the board of directors of a public school district may serve as a volunteer or a registered volunteer in the public school district if approved by the board of directors. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 9, 2017.

Workforce Development Center Authorities

ACT 509 (SB288) provides that school districts, cities, counties, or vocational-technical schools may act as sponsors to enter into an agreement to create a workforce development center authority. The act allows a sponsor to pledge funds to support the authority, including using its taxing power to dedicate tax revenue to the authority.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Building Better Futures

ACT 432 (HB1308) makes technical corrections to the Building Better Futures Program and Building Better Futures High School Program to align the programs and make the programs consistent. The act provides that a program may be established by an institution of higher education as a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program recognized by the United States Department of Education.

Dyslexia

ACT 1039 (SB708) requires the level II dyslexia screening to be consistent with the Arkansas Dyslexia Resource Guide, requires a public school district to report on its website or in writing information concerning the public school district's dyslexia intervention programs, and provides that failure to comply with the dyslexia screening and intervention requirements is a violation of the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts.

Instruction Permit or Driver's License - Eligibility

ACT 806 (HB2172) amends the law concerning the eligibility of a person under eighteen (18) years of age to apply for an instruction permit or driver's license by waiving the "C" average requirement for students with a "504 Plan."

Succeed Scholarship Program - Enrollment Waiver

ACT 637 (HB1056) allows the superintendent of a student's resident school district to waive the requirement that a student be enrolled in a public school for one (1) academic year in order to be eligible for a Succeed Scholarship.

Succeed Scholarship Program - Private Schools

ACT 327 (HB1461) provides that a private school is eligible to participate in the Succeed Scholarship Program if the private school is an associate member of or has applied for accreditation by an accrediting association recognized by the State Board of Education. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 2, 2017.

Various

ACT 874 (SB518) revises various provisions of the Arkansas Code, including technical corrections, language clarification, alignment of language with federal law, and repeal of obsolete language.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

College and Career Readiness

ACT 128 (SB135) removes obsolete references to "Arkansas Works" in the College and Career Coaches Program.

EDUCATION - GENERAL

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

English Learners

ACT 991 (HB1607) provides that the assessment scores of an English learner shall not be counted in the accountability ratings of a public school or public school district if the English learner has been enrolled in a public school or private school in the United States for less than twelve (12) months and provides that the assessment scores shall be counted only for growth purposes if the English learner has been enrolled in a public school or private school in the United States for at least twelve (12) months but not more than twenty-four (24) months.

Reading Level Reports

ACT 940 (SB494) requires a public school district to report a student's independent reading level twice annually to the parent and each teacher of the student if the student is in grades kindergarten through eight (K-8).

Voluntary Universal ACT Assessment Program

ACT 601 (HB1640) requires a public school district to allow a student to choose to take the ACT under the Voluntary Universal ACT Assessment Program in grade ten (10) or grade eleven (11).

STUDENTS - GENERALLY

Attendance

ACT 867 (HB1627) repeals the requirement that students in grades nine through twelve (9-12) attend a full school day for teachers to record attendance as physical presence and repeals the requirement for students enrolled in a private school or home school to be physically present to take a digital learning course taught through a public school or open-enrollment public charter school.

Awarding Credit Based on Subject Matter Competency

ACT 872 (HB1459) allows a public school district to submit a plan to the Department of Education for approval to award credit based on a demonstration of subject matter competency.

Home-schooled Students - Interscholastic Activities

ACT 592 (HB1474) provides that a home-schooled student approved to participate at a public school in an interscholastic activity that is an athletic activity may participate in the athletic activity one (1) calendar year after being approved. The act provides that if the interscholastic activity is not an athletic activity, the home-schooled student may participate immediately after being approved. The act also requires a public school to provide a reasonable alternative to a home-schooled student for any prerequisite for participation in an interscholastic activity if the home-schooled student is unable to meet the prerequisite because of enrollment in a home school.

Inter-district Transfers

ACT 1065 (SB371) provides that a student may remain in his or her current school if the student's parent relocates within the state due to a military mobilization, deployment, or available military housing. The act provides that a student transfer by agreement between school districts constitutes an independent agreement between the school districts and is not subject to other student transfer laws. The act repeals prohibitions on granting a legal transfer for desegregation-related provisions other than if the resident or receiving school district is under a desegregation-related court order and granting the transfer would violate the court order.

EDUCATION - GENERAL

STUDENTS - GENERALLY

Medical Marijuana and Effect on Public Schools

ACT 1099 (HB1935) amends Arkansas Constitution, Amendment 98, also known as the "Arkansas Medical Marijuana Amendment of 2016", to clarify that the amendment does not require a public school to permit a qualifying patient who is a student to be present on school grounds, to attend a school event, or to participate in extracurricular activities in violation of the student discipline policies if the behavior of the qualifying patient is impaired. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after April 7, 2017.

Military Basic Training

ACT 1064 (SB443) provides that a student may receive two (2) units of career focus graduation requirements for completing military basic training before graduating from high school.

Personal and Family Finance Standards

ACT 480 (HB1442) requires the Department of Education to develop personal and family finance standards and requires a public high school student earn a credit in a course that includes the standards in grade ten (10), grade eleven (11), or grade twelve (12) in order to graduate from high school. The act applies beginning with the entering ninth grade class of the 2017-2018 school year.

Succeed Scholarship Program

ACT 894 (HB1567) provides that up to twenty (20) foster children who live in group homes are eligible to receive a Succeed Scholarship for tuition at a private school. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after April 5, 2017.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention

ACT 1013 (HB1509) creates the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act to amend school district procedures concerning student physical activity to include recognition and management of sudden cardiac arrest. The act also sets penalties for athletics coaches who fail to meet the requirements regarding training on recognition and management of certain conditions including sudden cardiac arrest. The act also requires the Department of Education to establish guidelines for sudden cardiac arrest education.

Tuition for Concurrent Enrollment Courses

ACT 1118 (SB673) provides that a national school lunch student shall not be required to pay the costs of certain endorsed concurrent enrollment courses up to a maximum of six (6) hours. The act requires the costs to be paid by the public school district, by the institution of higher education offering the course, or through a cost-sharing agreement between the public school district and the institution of higher education. The act also provides that any costs paid by an institution of higher education shall not be considered an institutional scholarship.

United States Citizenship Civics Test

ACT 478 (HB1539) requires a student to take a test that is identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and correctly answer a certain number of questions in order to receive a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma. The act applies beginning in the 2018-2019 school year.

TASK FORCES

Legislative Task Force on Workforce Education Excellence

ACT 951 (SB441) creates the Legislative Task Force on Workforce Education Excellence to review and research ways to improve and align career and technical education programs and workforce development programs.

EDUCATION - GENERAL

TASK FORCES

Quality Digital Learning Provider Task Force

ACT 939 (SB506) repeals as obsolete the pilot program requiring school districts and charter schools to provide at least one (1) digital learning course. The act creates the Quality Digital Learning Provider Task Force to study digital learning and provide recommendations on the delivery of digital learning. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after April 5, 2017.

TEACHERS - GENERALLY

Background Checks

ACT 746 (HB1579) modifies the requirements for background checks for licensed personnel and classified employees of public school districts.

Constitutional Officers and Restriction on Employment

ACT 961 (HB2008) allows a constitutional officer who is credentialed or certified as a tutor, teacher, professor, or adjunct professor to be employed as a tutor, teacher, professor, or adjunct professor with a public school district, educational service cooperative, state-supported vocational education school, or state-supported college or university in this state.

Income Tax Deduction - Qualified Classroom Investment Expenses

ACT 666 (HB1014) creates an income tax deduction for teachers who expend money on qualified classroom investment expenses. The act is effective for tax years beginning on and after January 1, 2017.

Language of Instruction

ACT 989 (HB1611) allows an educator to provide instruction to a student in the student's native language to facilitate the student's ability to become proficient and learn in English. The act repeals the criminal penalty for instructing students in a language other than English.

Licensure Assessments

ACT 416 (SB328) provides that a person applying for a first-time elementary education (K-6) license or a special education (K-12) license must take and pass a stand-alone reading assessment concerning the science of reading.

Lifetime Teaching License

ACT 588 (HB1552) allows an educator who is retired under the voluntary retirement, early voluntary retirement, or disability retirement provisions of the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System to be eligible for a lifetime teaching license. The act repeals the requirement that a holder of a lifetime teaching license who has not taught for one (1) or more years to obtain twenty (20) hours of professional development before teaching again.

Maximum Number of Students

ACT 1113 (SB691) provides the maximum number of students a teacher may teach without receiving additional compensation and adds teachers in grades five (5) and six (6) to the teachers who may volunteer to teach for additional compensation more than the maximum number of students allowed per day. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after April 7, 2017.

Minimum Teacher Compensation

ACT 246 (HB1155) increases the amounts in the minimum teacher compensation schedule over a period of two (2) years.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification

ACT 937 (SB555) modifies the structure for awarding bonuses to teachers for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.

EDUCATION - GENERAL
TEACHERS - GENERALLY

Professional Licensure Standards Board

ACT 564 (HB1591) revises the composition of the Professional Licensure Standards Board and amends the duties of the board. The act authorizes the board to establish a code of ethics for teachers working under a waiver from licensure and raises the maximum fine that may be levied by the board. The act requires the Department of Education to include those who have received a waiver from licensure on the website used by school hiring officials to determine if a licensed person has been sanctioned for an ethics complaint involving sexual abuse of a student.

Retirement - Correction of Service Credit Errors

ACT 241 (HB1290) provides that the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System or its designee may correct an obvious error by an employer or the system that understates the service credit of a member upon which all required contributions have been paid. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after February 21, 2017.

Scholarships for Teachers in High-need Subject Areas

ACT 934 (SB26) creates a program that awards five thousand dollar (\$5,000) scholarships for juniors and seniors in college who agree to teach at a public school for at least five (5) consecutive years in a high-needs subject area. The act provides that if a scholarship recipient does not keep the agreement, the scholarships convert into a loan.

Scientific Reading Instruction

ACT 1063 (SB502) imposes requirements on educators concerning scientific reading instruction and requires public school districts and open-enrollment public charter schools to provide professional development in scientific reading instruction.

Teacher Candidate Loan Forgiveness Program

ACT 709 (SB27) creates the Teacher Candidate Loan Forgiveness Program, which provides a loan to a junior or senior in college who is majoring in a degree program that will lead to the individual becoming eligible for licensure as a teacher in a high-needs subject area. The act provides that the individual must agree to teach for five (5) consecutive years in a school or school district identified as a critical teacher shortage area. The act allows the loan to be forgiven on a pro rata basis for each year the individual teaches in the critical teacher shortage area.

Teacher Excellence and Support System

ACT 295 (HB1424) revises the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS), requires schools and school districts to report data collected under TESS for public school accountability purposes, and allows a school or school district to opt out of TESS and use a locally adopted evaluation system with approval of the State Board of Education.

Teacher Health Insurance

ACT 298 (HB1307) requires the Department of Education to transfer funds to the Employee Benefits Division of the Department of Finance and Administration for teacher health insurance. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after July 1, 2017.

Teacher Licensure

ACT 294 (HB1425) authorizes the State Board of Education to establish a tiered system of teacher licensure and allows teacher compensation to be based on licensure levels.

Teacher Opportunity Program

ACT 160 (HB1303) provides that the priority for the awarding of funds under the Teacher Opportunity Program is for reimbursements to teachers obtaining additional education in STEM fields, computer science, literacy, prekindergarten education, or special education.

EDUCATION - GENERAL

TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS - EDUCATION - TITLE 6

ACT 275 (HB1415) makes technical corrections recommended by the Arkansas Code Revision Commission to Title 6 of the Arkansas Code.

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

Certified Nurse Assistants Training

ACT 755 (HB2174) addresses duplicative training of certified nurse assistants in long-term care facilities by providing an exemption for licensure as a private career school offering resident or correspondence programs for these types of training programs.

EDUCATION - HIGHER

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Technical Skills Assessments

ACT 554 (SB423) requires the Department of Career Education to recognize third-party, industry-recognized assessments to evaluate a student's knowledge and technical skills necessary to enter into postsecondary education or a career. The act also requires the department to provide a current list of approved assessments.

COLLEGE PREPARATORY PROGRAMS

Building Better Futures

ACT 432 (HB1308) makes technical corrections to the Building Better Futures Program and Building Better Futures High School Program to align the programs and make the programs consistent. The act provides that a program may be established by an institution of higher education as a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program recognized by the United States Department of Education.

Technical Skills Assessments

ACT 554 (SB423) requires the Department of Career Education to recognize third-party, industry-recognized assessments to evaluate a student's knowledge and technical skills necessary to enter into postsecondary education or a career. The act also requires the department to provide a current list of approved assessments.

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

Tuition

ACT 1118 (SB673) provides that a national school lunch student shall not be required to pay the costs of certain endorsed concurrent enrollment courses up to a maximum of six (6) hours. The act requires the costs to be paid by the public school district, by the institution of higher education offering the course, or through a cost-sharing agreement between the public school district and the institution of higher education. The act also provides that any costs paid by an institution of higher education shall not be considered an institutional scholarship.

EMPLOYEES

Higher Education Uniform Classification and Compensation

ACT 599 (HB1785) creates higher education regular salary procedures and restrictions and creates the Higher Education Uniform Classification and Compensation Act. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after July 1, 2017.

Uniform Classification and Compensation

ACT 365 (SB289) revises the compensation plan under the Uniform Classification and Compensation Act, amends various laws concerning state employee salaries and benefits, and places the classification, compensation, and benefits authority of employees of institutions of higher education under the Department of Higher Education. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after July 1, 2017.

EDUCATION - HIGHER

HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

Funding Formula

ACT 148 (HB1209) requires the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt a productivity-based funding model for state-supported institutions of higher education.

Prevention of Sexual Assault

ACT 563 (HB1518) requires the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop an action plan to address the prevention of sexual assault.

HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Director

ACT 866 (HB1945) provides that the Governor appoints the Director of the Department of Higher Education.

Scholarships for Teachers in High-need Subject Areas

ACT 934 (SB26) creates a program that awards five thousand dollar (\$5,000) scholarships for juniors and seniors in college who agree to teach at a public school for at least five (5) consecutive years in a high-needs subject area. The act provides that if a scholarship recipient does not keep the agreement, the scholarships convert into a loan.

State Board of Private Career Education

ACT 565 (HB1650) transfers the State Board of Private Career Education to the Department of Higher Education by a type 2 transfer and amends the powers and duties of the State Board of Private Career Education. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 22, 2017.

Student Financial Assistance Report

ACT 868 (HB1804) revises the date by which the Department of Higher Education shall annually report to the Legislative Council on student financial assistance awarded by the department.

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

American History and Civil Government Course

ACT 870 (HB1805) modifies the contents of an American history or a civil government course required for a student to obtain a baccalaureate degree.

Boards of Visitors - Abolished

ACT 1006 (HB2163) abolishes the Board of Visitors for the University of Arkansas at Monticello and the Board of Visitors for the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

Dormitories

ACT 556 (SB309) repeals the prohibition on a community college or technical college constructing, maintaining, or operating a dormitory or barracks or levying or collecting a tax for a dormitory or barracks.

Exemption from Freedom of Information Act

ACT 541 (SB12) provides that emergency or security plan records and records related to security officers of a public school, public school district, or state-supported institution of higher education are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act of 1967.

Mergers

ACT 71 (SB10) provides that after a merger between a technical college and a four-year institution of higher education or university system, the board of trustees of the four-year institution of higher education or university system is vested with control of the technical college. The act also provides that after the merger, the former governing board of the technical college becomes a board of visitors. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after January 30, 2017.

EDUCATION - HIGHER

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Panic Button Alert Systems

ACT 984 (HB1897) provides that a state-supported institution of higher education may offer its students, employees, and other personnel a panic button alert system that is available as a smartphone application.

Workforce Development Center Authorities

ACT 509 (SB288) provides that school districts, cities, counties, or vocational-technical schools may act as sponsors to enter into an agreement to create a workforce development center authority. The act allows a sponsor to pledge funds to support the authority, including using its taxing power to dedicate tax revenue to the authority.

MEDICAL SCHOOLS

Application of the Law

ACT 147 (SB118) clarifies that certain sections in the Arkansas Code apply to all medical schools in the state. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after February 7, 2017.

Physician Educational License

ACT 1061 (SB672) provides that an educational license for physicians in Arkansas may be issued to a physician affiliated with a medical school accredited by either a medical or an osteopathic accrediting agency. The act also allows a physician holding an educational license in Arkansas to be affiliated with an accredited medical or osteopathic medical school outside the state. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after April 6, 2017.

PREMISES, BUILDINGS, AND FACILITIES

Possession of a Concealed Handgun - Advanced Concealed Carry License

ACT 562 (HB1249) establishes an advanced concealed carry licensing process whereby a concealed carry licensee can undergo training created by the Department of Arkansas State Police to earn an endorsement, enabling him or her to carry a concealed handgun in additional areas, such as most public buildings and facilities and a public university or college campus. The act also expands the places operated by certain private entities where a person with the endorsement may carry a concealed handgun unless the private entity takes affirmative steps to explicitly prohibit the possession of a concealed handgun on the private entity's premises. This act was subsequently amended by Act 859 of 2017. The act is effective on and after September 1, 2017.

Possession of a Concealed Handgun by a Licensee - Prohibited Places

ACT 859 (SB724) amends Act 562 of 2017 to prohibit carrying a concealed handgun by a licensee in certain places, including public daycares, collegiate sporting events, the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences, and the Arkansas State Hospital if those places submit a security plan to the Department of Arkansas State Police that would designate them as firearm-sensitive areas where possession of concealed handgun by a licensee is prohibited. The act also clarifies that a private entity may prohibit a person from carrying a concealed handgun under any circumstance by posting appropriate signs and communicating the prohibition verbally or in writing. The act is effective on and after September 1, 2017.

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Arkansas Victim Assistance Academy

ACT 459 (HB1406) repeals language that designates the Criminal Justice Institute at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock as the lead agency for the Arkansas Victim Assistance Academy.

EDUCATION - HIGHER

SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AND FINANCIAL AID

Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Awards

ACT 1041 (SB30) provides that an applicant for an Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship may elect for the earned semester credit hours counted for purposes of determining scholarship award amounts to be only those earned after high school graduation and not those awarded as concurrent credit.

Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program - Eligibility

ACT 719 (SB542) provides that a student may attend summer terms at the student's own expense to earn credit hours necessary to maintain eligibility and clarifies that a traditional student who loses eligibility may apply for a scholarship as a nontraditional student.

Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program - Scholarship Use

ACT 597 (HB1957) provides that a recipient of an Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship may use the scholarship for courses that lead to a graduate-level or professional degree. The act allows a recipient to receive the highest level scholarship on a pro rata basis while enrolled part-time if the recipient is enrolled in the number of credit hours necessary to complete a degree program.

Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program - Traditional Students

ACT 315 (SB31) allows a student who did not receive a scholarship as a freshman but who completes certain requirements as a freshmen to be classified as a traditional student in subsequent academic years.

Arkansas Future Grant Program

ACT 316 (HB1426) creates the Arkansas Future Grant Program to provide grants for students to receive an associate degree or a certification if the students agree to receive mentoring, perform community service, reside in the state for three (3) consecutive years, and begin working six (6) months after receiving an associate degree or a certification. The act provides that the grant converts into a loan if a student does not perform all the requirements in the agreement. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 2, 2017.

Arkansas Tax-Deferred Tuition Savings Program - 529 Plan Review Committee

ACT 547 (SB427) requires the Treasurer of State to provide office space, materials, and staff for the 529 Plan Review Committee and allows the individual members of the committee to expend funds appropriated to the members to provide certain services for the benefit of the Arkansas Tax-Deferred Tuition Savings Program. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 21, 2017.

Arkansas Tax-Deferred Tuition Savings Program - Carry Forward

ACT 481 (HB1473) provides that a tax deduction for a contribution to a tuition savings account in the Arkansas Tax-Deferred Tuition Savings Program may be carried forward for the next four (4) succeeding tax years.

Arkansas Tax-Deferred Tuition Savings Program - Contributions

ACT 883 (HB1802) provides that contributions to a tuition savings account under a tax-deferred tuition savings program established by another state may be deducted from a taxpayer's income tax.

Arkansas Tax-Deferred Tuition Savings Program - Employer Contributions

ACT 884 (HB1762) allows an employer to make a matching contribution to an employee's tax-deferred tuition savings program as an employee benefit and limits the maximum contribution amount.

EDUCATION - HIGHER

SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AND FINANCIAL AID

Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship

ACT 613 (SB528) creates the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship that is funded by any excess lottery proceeds from the previous academic year and is available to assist a person in obtaining an associate degree or a certification that would lead to being qualified to work in a high-demand occupation in the fields of industry, health care, or information technology. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 23, 2017.

Arkansas Workforce Improvement Grant Program

ACT 316 (HB1426) repeals the Arkansas Workforce Improvement Grant Program. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 2, 2017.

Community Match Rural Physician Recruitment Program

ACT 132 (HB1030) amends the Arkansas Rural Medical Practice Student Loan and Scholarship Program and the Community Match Rural Physician Recruitment Program to improve and increase access to health care in medically underserved communities. The act also allows a resident of Arkansas who graduated from a foreign medical school to participate in the program.

Graduate Nursing Practice and Nurse Educator Student Loans and Scholarships

ACT 753 (HB1538) amends the law concerning graduate nursing practice and nurse educator student loans and scholarships to make doctoral nursing programs eligible for funding.

Higher Education Opportunities Grant Program

ACT 316 (HB1426) repeals the Higher Education Opportunities Grant Program and provides that a student who is a recipient of a grant under the program as of the effective day of the act shall continue to receive the grant. The act declares an emergency and is effective on and after March 2, 2017.

Requirements and Eligibility

ACT 1008 (HB2243) amends various provisions of the law concerning scholarship programs. The act makes technical corrections, clarifies the award for the Arkansas Governor's Scholarship and Arkansas Governor's Distinguished Scholarship, repeals the Second Effort Scholarship Program, clarifies eligibility criteria for a nontraditional student in the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program, and provides that only a first-time recipient of an Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship who has earned semester credit hours must submit a transcript to the Department of Higher Education to determine the correct scholarship award amount.

Scholarships for Teachers in High-need Subject Areas

ACT 934 (SB26) creates a program that awards five thousand dollar (\$5,000) scholarships for juniors and seniors in college who agree to teach at a public school for at least five (5) consecutive years in a high-needs subject area. The act provides that if a scholarship recipient does not keep the agreement, the scholarships convert into a loan.

Student Financial Assistance Report

ACT 868 (HB1804) revises the date by which the Department of Higher Education shall annually report to the Legislative Council on student financial assistance awarded by the department.

EDUCATION - HIGHER

SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AND FINANCIAL AID

Teacher Candidate Loan Forgiveness Program

ACT 709 (SB27) creates the Teacher Candidate Loan Forgiveness Program, which provides a loan to a junior or senior in college who is majoring in a degree program that will lead to the individual becoming eligible for licensure as a teacher in a high-needs subject area. The act provides that the individual must agree to teach for five (5) consecutive years in a school or school district identified as a critical teacher shortage area. The act allows the loan to be forgiven on a pro rata basis for each year the individual teaches in the critical teacher shortage area.

Tuition Benefits for Soldiers and Airmen of the Arkansas National Guard

ACT 471 (SB278) provides that a soldier or airman of the Arkansas National Guard may attend a state-supported institution of higher education tuition-free. The act repeals the Arkansas National Guard Tuition Incentive Program, but allows a recipient who is receiving a benefit under the repealed program on the effective date of the act to continue receiving the benefit.

World War I Veterans

ACT 844 (HB1806) repeals the requirement that World War I veterans be admitted to state-supported institutions of higher education tuition-free.

STUDENTS

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Services

ACT 1007 (HB1666) requires institutions of higher education to provide information on mental health and suicide prevention services to entering students.

TASK FORCES

Legislative Task Force on Workforce Education Excellence

ACT 951 (SB441) creates the Legislative Task Force on Workforce Education Excellence to review and research ways to improve and align career and technical education programs and workforce development programs.

TUITION AND FUNDING

Funding Formula

ACT 148 (HB1209) requires the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt a productivity-based funding model for state-supported institutions of higher education.

Tax-Deferred Tuition Savings Program

ACT 883 (HB1802) provides that contributions to a tuition savings account under a tax-deferred tuition savings program established by another state may be deducted from a taxpayer's income tax.

Veterans, Military Members, and Dependents

ACT 947 (SB773) requires an honorable discharge for a veteran to be eligible for in-state tuition and extends eligibility to Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets who have executed United States Armed Forces service contracts.

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Crowley's Ridge Technical Institute & East Arkansas Community College - Merger

ACT 636 (HB1543) specifies the process for a possible voluntary merger of Crowley's Ridge Technical Institute into East Arkansas Community College and provides for appropriation changes if the institutions choose to merge. Section 3 of the act concerning appropriation changes is effective on the date of the merger if the merger occurs before June 30, 2018.

ELECTIONS

ABSENTEE VOTING

Processing Absentee Ballots

ACT 790 (HB2035) amends the dates for processing absentee ballots.